Editorial: The Language is Changing

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Editor's Note

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Issue 01 - Editor's Note

by Lynda Leavitt

Welcome to the inaugural issue of ELA, Journal of Educational Leadership in Action. In this issue, you will find Lindenwood University’s Lighthouse Award winning dissertation, a study on Professional Learning Communities, research on elementary and middle school principals’ emotional intelligence, and two manuscripts within higher education: one investigating the core competencies of executive leadership, and the other focusing on department restructuring related to the effects of first- and second-order change. You will also find an editorial written by an experienced superintendent on rethinking the language of technology. The editors at ELA invite you to submit your research, editorial, or book review for publication consideration in the upcoming spring issue. The submission deadline for Issue 2 is April 15.

We hope you take a few minutes to send us a note sharing your thoughts on our online format, use of videos, and ideas for upcoming issues.

As winter is upon us and we welcome you to our first issue, the editors at ELA wish you all the best,

Lynda

Editor, ELA

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The Language is Changing

by John D. Long

When I began teaching full-time this fall in the undergraduate teacher education program at Lindenwood University, it was following a full career in K–12 public education. During that previous career, which included twenty-one years as a principal and superintendent, I have hired and supervised well over 200 new teachers. Unfortunately, the almost universally applicable characteristic they possessed was a lack of knowledge about how to apply technology to their own new classrooms. I am certain that some of the more recent hires actually had the knowledge of the web and technology they would need, but they just didn’t have the examples of how to apply that knowledge in a practical manner that all new teachers need when they begin.

The college students of today are digital natives. Few, if any, remember a time without computers in their homes and schools. They typically carry more powerful computers in their pockets than the first one I bought when my teaching career began almost thirty years ago. And yet, knowing how to apply that technological familiarity to a classroom setting has proven elusive to most of them. As I spoke with them after their hire, and spoke with them in class, the reason became very clear. They are being taught by digital migrants, like me. Understand that I consider myself technologically savvy, but that is a relative comparison. I am definitely living the old adage that in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. If my digital knowledge exceeds that of many of my peers, it pales in comparison to the typical college freshman. I am a technology second-language learner in a world of native speakers. My attempts to metaphorically correct the grammar of the native speakers are often met with scepticism, if not derision. You see, the language has changed and many of us in education failed to notice.

This language issue grows from their experiences in both K–12 and higher education. Both institutions are populated by a majority of educators who have not universally embraced the shift to the digital age and a new style and depth of communication. One thing we know from experience is that when pressed in our new classrooms we tend to fall back on what we know, which means not WHAT we were taught, but HOW we were taught. I had a discussion with a group of my students this summer about their expectations for the class I was about to teach. Their comments can be distilled into this: “We HATE IT when we are lectured to about how to use non-lecture teaching methodologies. SHOW us, don’t TELL us.” They were passionate about their careers, their hopes, and their goals. They wanted someone, anyone, to help them navigate those often rocky waters. They realized that at this point, they were unprepared to walk into a classroom of students and implement the curriculum using more than a basic lecture augmented by PowerPoint and a few group instruction techniques. I could sense their anger, their frustration, but mostly their fear. I thought back to my own undergraduate instruction and remembered I had the same basic issues. I could lecture, but to do more was going to be up to me. I was blessed to have been in the classes of several very gifted lecturers, and while I may have improved over time, as a 22-year-old rookie teacher, I was overmatched as a lecturer facing 30 high-school students.

The solution lies not just schools of education, but in classrooms in all disciplines where students learn their subject content. If it was just up to the schools of education, we could hopefully train our own faculty in the needed technology and mandate they use it. However, all students must navigate a variety of ivy-covered buildings in search of the knowledge needed to teach in public education today. When those content-area professors teach in the way they were themselves taught years before, the cycle is unfortunately perpetuated. When students think back in their own classrooms on how they learned English, math, etc., they remember a teaching style that has changed little in the last 75 years and when pressed, they teach the same way. Getting non-education professors to change their style of teaching lies outside our realm of influence, but a solution is still needed.

One way to tackle that needed change is through a change in the education curriculum to include specific technology education. My university has implemented this approach, and it is certainly a step forward as it provides specific instruction about what technology exists and how to use it. Unfortunately, providing exposure is only the first step on the long path to competence. It is similar to giving a vocabulary list with no grammar or sentence structure instruction when learning a new language. It is a needed first step, but nothing more. The next step is to teach using these tools ourselves. This is being done on a small scale now, but it has to be implemented more broadly if we expect our students to succeed. Students know they need to see the techniques and resources in action to be able to grasp technology to the level needed to use it in their own classrooms. Finally, the students need to be expected to use the technology in their undergraduate classroom presentations, their practicums, and their student teaching. To the extent possible, they need to be placed in the classrooms of cooperating teachers who are technologically savvy and whose professional practice continues to develop in this area. Much like travelling to a foreign country with a native language speaker, the students will learn how to implement the knowledge on the fly.
Is this an impossible task? Certainly not. However, as they always have, students will select, whenever possible, those professors they feel will provide them with the best chance to succeed. In a tight labor market, students know they need every possible edge to get, and keep, the scarce teaching jobs that are available. They will select those professors who give them that edge, even if it means more work on their part or classes at less convenient times. As that happens, the spread of technology usage in the classroom will speed up. Certainly some education majors will take the path of least resistance, as many unemployed education majors have in the past, but I continue to put my trust in the profession that has driven advancement in this country for over two hundred years. We may have been slow to adapt, but adapt we will. The language has changed, and if we wish to still be in the conversation at large, we have to learn to speak it like a local.

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PLCs: Student Outcomes Evaluation in a Midwest High School

by Kelly E. Dickinson

Abstract

This study was an evaluation of student outcomes following a five-year implementation of PLCs at Midwest High School in the U.S. Three research questions were addressed: (1) Has student achievement increased during the course of implementing PLCs? If so, is there evidence that this is a result of a contribution from PLC implementation from 2006-2011? (2) Have teacher attitudes toward curriculum rigor, public image, quality of education, and post-high school preparedness changed during the implementation of PLCs from 2006-2011? (3) Is the staff, in April 2011, a mature PLC? For research question one, eight hypotheses resulted in the evaluation of quantitative data. Freshmen report cards were analyzed using a chi-square test for homogeneity of proportions. Algebra I, Biology, and English II Missouri EOC Exam data were analyzed using a Z-test for difference in proportions. Finally, Algebra I, American Government, English II, and Biology final exams were analyzed using a Z-test for difference in proportions. For research questions two and three, teacher survey data was analyzed using a Likert-like scale. Only the Algebra I and Biology Missouri EOC Exam data showed measurable increases in student outcomes at an alpha level of 0.05. Based on the study, the researcher identified strengths of Midwest High School that included its schoolwide intervention program, shared-decision making by leadership, rigorous curriculum, post-high school preparedness, and the Algebra I and Biology PLC teams. The researcher made recommendations to Midwest High School that could help fill in the gaps identified in this study. Additionally, the researcher discussed the implications of this study for PLC high schools and high schools whose staff wishes to become a PLC.

1. Introduction

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was adopted, and United States public school districts became accountable for demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on state assessment scores and graduation and attendance rates (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010c). The federal government began requiring states and school districts to “provide annual report cards with information such as achievement data broken down by subgroup and information on whether school districts are making [AYP]” (Requirements of No Child Left Behind Act, 2002, p. T20). According to guidelines, schools not meeting AYP criteria in the same area for two consecutive years would be placed into School Improvement status and suffer additional consequences (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010c). According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010c), schools that remained in School Improvement status risked public scrutiny, loss of students to better performing schools, loss and reorganization of staff, and state takeover. Ultimately, the goal of NCLB was that all students be proficient in math and reading by 2014 (Requirements of No Child Left Behind, 2002). Despite increased accountability requirements for schools through NCLB, the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (2011) reported that math and reading scores have not changed significantly over the past four decades.

Midwest High School is a public high school in Missouri, and in 2005 they were no exception to the national trend. Overall, they did not meet AYP in math or communication arts for three years in a row from 2003 through 2005 (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010a). Midwest High School was a high school serving just less than 2,000 students in grades nine through 12.
During the implementation of PLCs, the student demographics at Midwest High School showed a 87% white, 10% black, and 3% Asian and Hispanic. The percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (FRL) increased from 11.6% to 14.9% over five years (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010).

Because Midwest High School did not meet AYP in math or communication arts for three years in a row (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010a), administrators and teachers began looking for a school improvement model. In spring 2006, they chose PLCs as their model for improvement, like hundreds of other PLC schools across the United States and Canada (Solution Tree, 2011). For Midwest High School staff, this decision was based largely on literature supporting PLCs (DuFour, R. P., DuFour, R., & Eaker, 2008).

R. P. DuFour and Eaker (1998) claimed that in order for schools to be successful they must adopt PLCs. “Virtually every leading educational researcher and almost all professional organizations for educators have endorsed [PLCs]” (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010, p. 91). R. P. DuFour first developed PLCs at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois during his tenure as principal beginning in 1983 (Schmoker, 2001). PLCs are focused on three big ideas: learning, collaboration, and results (DuFour, R. P., 2007). Learning refers to “the fundamental purpose of the school, [which] is to ensure all students learn at high levels” (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008, p. 18). Educators, too, need to learn continuously if they are to help students (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008). Collaboration refers to the responsibility of educators to work with one another to help all students (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008). Finally, achieving results refers to the continuous monitoring of learning through the collection of evidence. R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) stated that “schools must systematically monitor students learning on an ongoing basis and use evidence of results to respond immediately to students who experience difficulty, to inform individual and collective practice, and to fuel continuous improvement” (pp. 18-19). Results are the key focus (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010).

Starting in March 2006 and continuing through May 2011, Midwest High School worked toward becoming a PLC with student outcomes focused on three areas. The first area of focus was assessments that were collaboratively developed by teachers called common assessments. The second student outcome evaluated was the Missouri State End of Course (EOC) Exams that were given to all high school students in the areas of English II, American Government, Biology, and Algebra I. The purpose of evaluating common assessment data is to improve student achievement (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010). Finally, the evaluation of student outcomes at Midwest High School focused on first semester freshman report cards, since this semester of the students’ high school career is most closely monitored at Midwest High School (PLC Leadership Team, 2011). Thus, the author of this study used quantitative data from EOC exams, common assessments, and freshman report cards to evaluate the student outcomes.

The researcher also analyzed teacher survey data from two different staff surveys as an indicator of the effectiveness of the implementation of PLCs at Midwest High School. The first survey was written by Midwest High School's PLC Leadership Team and was given in October 2006 and April 2011. The second survey was written by and used with permission from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and was given in April 2011. It was designed, in part, to measure the “maturity of staffs as a learning community” (Hord, Meehan, Orletsky, & Sattes, 1999, p. 2).

a. Importance of Study

This study was an evaluation of student academic outcomes following the five-year implementation of PLCs in Midwest High School. Fullan (2007) stated PLCs are difficult to implement because they involve changing a culture, not starting a program. However, literature states that since 21st-century education will require teachers to work in PLCs (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010), successful creation of a learning community capable of effecting measurable change in student academic outcomes is imperative. Thus, this study may serve as a model for other high school leaders wanting to evaluate their progress in PLC implementation. This study will add to the few existing quantitative student outcomes studies related to PLCs at the high school level in that it is also a quantitative study of student outcomes, and it provides insight into the PLC implementation process.

b. Rationale for the Study

A large amount of resources were utilized by the administrators and staff in an attempt to implement PLCs at Midwest High School. All building goals and professional development monies were linked to PLCs from March 2006 through May 2011. All building-wide professional development time was spent working on PLC initiatives; this time totalled a minimum of 34 hours per year for all staff and more than 36 additional hours per year for the members of the PLC Leadership Team. Professional development time was spent working on the development of functioning PLC groups, common course summative assessments, and, in alignment with the PLC literature, a comprehensive schoolwide system of tiered interventions and incentives for students (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008). Staff spent more than 110 school hours and over 90 after-school hours per year working with students on interventions and incentives.

c. Research Questions

The primary goal of Midwest High School from March 2006 through May 2011 was to effectively implement PLCs, thus becoming a mature PLC. The researcher measured outcomes by evaluating changes in student achievement in core subject areas and analyzing teacher survey data, as demonstrated by the following research questions.

1. Has student achievement increased during the course of implementing PLCs? If so, is there evidence that this is a result of a contribution from PLC implementation from 2006–2011?
2. Have teacher attitudes toward curriculum rigor, public image, quality of education, and post–high school preparedness changed during the implementation of PLCs from 2006–2011?
3. Is the staff, in April 2011, a mature PLC as measured by a diagnostic tool called School Professional Staff as Learning Community Questionnaire, which was designed, written, and validated by SEDL (Hord et al., 1999)?

According to Hord et al. (1999), this survey was developed in 1996 at SEDL. SEDL is “a private, nonprofit education research, development, and dissemination (RD&D) corporation based in Austin, Texas [that is dedicated to] improving teaching and learning” (SEDL, 2011, para. 1).

d. Null Hypothesis

H₀ 1. There will be no measurable difference in average grade point average when comparing semester one freshmen report cards for each academic year from December 2005 to December 2010.

H₀ 2. There will be no measurable difference in average scores achieved for the course Algebra I on the semester one common final exam between December 2009 and December 2010.

H₀ 3. There will be no measurable difference in average scores achieved for the course American Government on the semester one common final exam between December 2009 and December 2010.

H₀ 4. There will be no measurable difference in average scores achieved for the course Biology on the semester one common final exam between December 2009 and December 2010.

H₀ 5. There will be no measurable difference in average scores achieved for the course English II on the semester one common final exam between December 2009 and December 2010.

H₀ 6. There will be no measurable difference in proportion of students who achieved Advanced and Proficient on the Algebra I Missouri State End of Course Exam between May 2009 and May 2011.

H₀ 7. There will be no measurable difference in proportion of students who achieved Advanced and Proficient on the Biology Missouri State End of Course Exam between May 2009 and May 2011.

H₀ 8. There will be no measurable difference in proportion of students who achieved Advanced and Proficient on the English II Missouri State End of Course Exam between May 2009 and May 2011.

e. Limitations and Threats to Validity

This study was limited in several ways. First, it was limited in its ability to evaluate the effectiveness of every component of the PLC process at Midwest High School. The information gathered and the analysis completed was intended to give a broad understanding of the academic status and collaborative status as a whole over a five-year period. Additional analysis would have to be completed to determine the effectiveness of each component of the school as well as the academic progress of each course. Another limitation was that the information system at Midwest High School changed during the course of this study, so the population size for the Algebra I common final exams that was collected for hypothesis two may be unreliable. A third limitation was that the format of the Missouri State EOC Exams changed between 2010 and 2011 in that the constructed response sections were eliminated from Algebra I, Biology, and English II for the 2011 test due to budgeting cuts at the state level in Missouri.

There were four threats to internal validity. The first threat was that the population of students and teachers was different from year to year. This study did not follow the same group of students with the same teachers over a five-year period. Rather, the researcher analyzed data from different groups of students in the same courses or grade levels. However, the student demographics did not change significantly during the period of time in which this study was conducted.

The second threat to internal validity was that the researcher was a member of the PLC Leadership Team that oversaw the PLC implementation. Therefore, bias was possible. To alleviate the effects of possible bias, this study was largely quantitative in nature, and quantitative data was selected using a random sampling tool (Social Psychology Network, 2008). Additionally, to address the extent to which the school is a learning community while addressing research question three, the researcher chose to evaluate data that had been collected with a nationally tested, valid instrument instead of one that was created within the building. This instrument, School Professional Staff as Learning Community Questionnaire, was developed by Hord (Hord et al., 1999). It was nationally field tested by Appalachia Educational laboratory and was found at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to be “useful as a screening, filtering, or measuring device to assess the maturity of a school’s professional staff” (Meehan, Orletsky, & Sattes, 1997, Abstract).

The third threat to internal validity was the survey questions used to address research question two which were written by the PLC Leadership Team at Midwest High School. Additionally, these survey questions were not tested for validity, and bias is possible. Attempts to eliminate bias were made through team discussions during the survey writing process.

The final threat to internal validity was the tools available to collect data. Because of this limitation, the common summative exam data obtained for hypotheses two through five was a convenience sample, randomly chosen from data that was available, not from the entire population. This was particularly true for 2009 Algebra I common summative assessment scores.

There was one threat to external validity in this study. Midwest High School was a suburban high school of nearly 2,000
2. Background

The focus of this background was on the components necessary to affect change in any organization. For each component, the researcher discussed the literature as a whole and then in the context of PLCs, specifically. Finally, the researcher identified missteps that lead to change failure and educational examples of successful change. During this literature review, studies from businesses, healthcare organizations, and high schools were included while studies from elementary and middles schools were generally omitted.

a. Introduction

As a whole, schools across the United States were in need of positive change. The United States was not a leader when comparing science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and reading scores of its adolescent students to students in other countries (Baldi et al., 2007; Emeagwali, 2010; Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, Shelley, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Emeagwali (2010) reported the National Science Board found student scores in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to be decreasing among adolescents. Fleischman et al. (2010) reported the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked 15-year old United States students seventh in reading literacy, 18th in mathematics, and 13th in science. In each case, their scores were at or below the average reported scores for all countries combined (Fleischman et al., 2010). Though the PISA math and science scores in 2009 showed improvements for United States students in both average score and international rank over the corresponding 2006 scores, the United States was not a world leader (Baldi et al., 2007). Consequently, President Barack Obama cited the improvement of math, science, and literacy scores as educational priorities (Emeagwali, 2010).

To achieve academic improvement for United States students, schools needed to develop plans through which to change what they were currently doing (Emeagwali, 2010). PLCs were one possible way to reach that goal. R. P. DuFour and R. DuFour (2010) described PLCs as grounded in three main ideas: students learning at high levels, educators collaborating, and results were the key focus. R. P. DuFour and Eaker (1998) claimed that students could achieve results through targeted teacher collaboration and a shared mission, vision, values, and goals. Fullan (2007) stated that PLCs were not a program but were a change in a culture due to the need to shift the mindset of educators.

The literature on PLCs claimed they were, for educators, the key to effecting successful, sustainable change in their organizations. R. P. DuFour and Eaker (1998) told readers that in order for schools to institute successful changes that increased student achievement, they must adopt PLCs. "Virtually every leading educational researcher and almost all professional organizations for educators... endorsed [PLCs]" (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010, p. 91). Among the organizations cited as endorsers of PLCs were the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the National Education Association, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and the National Council of Teachers of English (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008).

The researcher investigated business, healthcare, and educational literature that gave organizations insight when working toward successful, sustainable change (Fullan, 2007; Spiro, 2011). The goal of the researcher in doing so was to communicate the relationship between general literature and what was known about PLCs. The general literature showed that successful, sustainable change occurred when there was a common mission, vision, values, and goals, good leadership, and focused teamwork. Each of these components was addressed independently in the sections that follow. The literature on PLCs mirrored the general literature in these areas and was discussed following each of the related sections.

b. Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals

In the general literature, the most commonly shared definition of a mission statement was that it communicated a purpose for an organization, or an indication of what was to be achieved or accomplished (Cady et al., 2011; Spiro, 2011; Verma, 2009). The literature on PLCs reflected the business literature with respect to the mission statement (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). Like Cady et al. (2011), R. P. DuFour and Eaker (1998) expressed that a mission statement explained why an organization existed. As such, it put everyone in an organization on the same path and gave them a reason for being there in the first place (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). It answered questions about the educators’ responsibilities to the students and explained the existence of a school by clarifying the school’s priorities and pointing it onto the correct path (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). DuFour, R. P., et al. (2008) urged schools not to spend copious amounts of time writing mission statements, though, because they claimed the real quality work came with living the mission statement.

Like a mission statement, a vision statement is a statement with a purpose. A vision, though, is a statement of where a person or organization is going (Finley, 2010; Reason, 2010; Yokl, 2011). Finley (2010) reported a vision statement to be a clear picture of what the end product will look like. In a book about educational leadership, Reason (2010) compared a vision to a “destination” (p. 55). Yokl (2011) reported that a vision focuses direction and “separates our routine work from the big picture” (p. 52).

Similarly, PLC literature cited several reasons why a vision statement was essential to the success of a PLC school (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008; DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) said “shared vision motivates and energizes people” (p. 143). It painted a picture of the school’s future and allowed people to visualize a target so they could

Meglino and Ravlin (1998) defined values as “end-states of existence that a person strives to achieve” (p. 353). They also stated that values are “modes of behavior” (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998, p. 353). The PLC literature defined values as a code of conduct that was created by a learning organization in order to reach the vision (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). Values, also called collective commitments, were no more than 10 statements with direct language that explained the personal behavior expected within a learning organization (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998); this association of values to personal expected behavior is much like the definition reported by Meglino and Ravlin (1998). R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) explained that values were essential to a learning organization because they provided accountability for the people who had written them and they helped drive the cultural shift necessary to become a PLC.

Armenakis and Harris (2009) contended that a cultural shift could not take place without setting goals, and the analysis of a problem that comes prior to setting goals is a key component to successful, sustainable change. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) and Spiro (2011) agreed that writing goals to solve problems and realize change comes after diagnosing the problems in an organization. They added that when goals are written they must include benchmarks with detailed timelines, and they must involve all stakeholders (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Spiro, 2011). Like other literature, Nelson, Lebard, and Waters (2010) and R. P. DuFour (2007) explained that implementing PLCs must involve a focus, or a goal. Additionally, all goals for a learning organization should be SMART (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010; O’Neill & Conzemius, 2006). SMART goals are “Strategic AND Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, and Time-bound” (O’Neill & Conzemius, 2006, p. 13). Goals are a requirement for success in any school because they prioritize the steps toward the vision in a systematic way (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998).

c. Leadership

Effective leadership is one of the most important components in any change process (O’Doherty & Owando, 2009; Spiro, 2011). In their 2009 study of a successful school district, O’Doherty and Owando (2009) found the number one factor affecting success to be leadership. Planning and shared accountability were secondary (O’Doherty & Owando, 2009). Spiro (2011) agreed that excellent leadership is a mandatory component of the success of an organization.

Effective leaders share several characteristics. One of these characteristics is that good leaders understand the change process (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Fullan, 2001; O’Doherty & Owando, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Spiro, 2011). A good leader can focus on just a few priorities that support the vision, and he or she has the ability and foresight to align the money and other resources with that vision (O’Doherty & Owando, 2009). A leader knows how to implement changes (Armenakis & Harris, 2009) and can think several steps ahead of the current reality (Spiro, 2011). Additionally, Parrett and Budge (2009) found in their study of six high schools that a good leader can eliminate the noise associated with outside initiatives. This noise might include outside influences such as attempts by boards of education members to press personal agendas or central office employee initiatives that do not align with building goals.

Effective leaders provide needed training, or professional development (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Fisher, 2007; Gajda & Koliba, 2008), and they put together professional development that will benefit teams (Chan & Chen, 2010; De Jong & Elfring, 2010; Ding & Ng, 2010; Locander & Luechauer, 2009). People will not support change if they fear they do not have the skills to contribute to it successfully (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Zigarmi, P., Hoekstra, Blanchard, & Zigarmi, D., 2010). Armenakis and Harris (2009) found that effective leaders know how to involve people in the change process and offer professional development to increase their performance. Gajda and Koliba (2008) stated that professional development should include training and modeling on how to collaborate. Fisher (2007) agreed that collaboration will not happen on its own but must be taught through professional development. Also, Chan and Chen (2010) concluded leaders should promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills through professional development.

Locander and Luechauer (2009) told readers that teambuilding is an obligation associated with professional development because effective leaders do not forget the human element, and they need to be as concerned with their people as they are with their profits. Teams, especially long-term teams, should be purposefully built and actively maintained so that relationships and trust are strong (De Jong & Elfring, 2010). This can be accomplished by purposefully increasing social interactions among team members (Ding & Ng, 2010). This might include prohibiting email communications one day of the week or participating in community service projects during work time (Locander & Luechauer, 2009). Gajda and Koliba (2008), through their development of a tool for leaders to evaluate teacher collaboration, identified the role of the effective principal to include evaluating and correcting weaknesses in teachers’ collaboration.

Another characteristic of effective leaders is that they have credibility (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; O’Doherty & Owando, 2009). In their 2006 study, Clark and Payne determined that good leaders are trustworthy and credible because they follow through on promises. Their expectations are clear and consistent (O’Doherty & Owando, 2009), and they are strong communicators (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). “Employees want leaders they can trust” (Perrin & Blauth, 2010, p. 9), so having credibility as a leader is essential to good leadership.

Successful leaders can motivate their people because they recognize that fear will not drive them into action (Fullan, 2007). One way leaders motivate their people is by improving emotions within their organization (Fullan, 2001) through being supportive (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). Leaders are also able to build self-esteem among people by choosing small tasks toward the goals initially so that successes can be celebrated (Armenakis & Harris, 2009).
Eaker, 1998; Nelson et al., 2010; Wood, 2007). Nelson et al. (2010) said PLCs are characterized by great leadership. The ability for principals to develop PLCs is very important (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010) since "strong principals are crucial to the creation of learning communities" (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998, p. 183) and to the change process (Fullan, 2007). Principals must truly understand learning communities to be effective (Wood, 2007).

Like other literature, PLC literature stated that good leaders know how to focus on what is important (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010; DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008; DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998; Wood, 2007). They work to protect the sanctity of the school’s mission, vision, and values (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). They proactively attend to progress (Wood, 2007) that is focused on changing undesirable teacher behaviours (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010) and achieving desirable student results and continuous teacher learning (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). Good principals can motivate teachers to make decisions collectively from the ground up (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998) by telling stories that speak to both the minds and the emotions of the teachers (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008).

Another characteristic that good principal leaders have is a respect for time (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010; Nelson et al., 2010; Wood, 2007). Nelson et al. (2010) stressed the importance of time for teacher collaboration with respect to achieving goals that are focused on student work. Good principals provide teachers time to work and learn together multiple times per month (Wood, 2007). All of this is accomplished by working the needed time into the master schedule (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010).

Like other literature, PLC literature stated that effective principals help the teachers by supporting collaborative teams (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998; Wood, 2007). They foster collaboration by providing needed outside information to the teams (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998; Wood, 2007). Wood (2007) also pointed out good principals take part in team building exercises and then further create stability within the teams by keeping largely the same groups together from year to year.

d. Teamwork

Carew et al. (2010) contended that “no one of us is as smart as all of us” (p. 188). Businesses and other workplaces, then, need teams of people working together collaboratively if they want to be successful (Carew et al., 2010). Fullan (2001) agreed that both businesses and schools need to develop teams that work together collaboratively or they will not be successful.

The highest performing teams have commonalities in both their processes and their organization (Carew et al., 2010; Maxwell, 2009; O’Neill & Conzenius, 2006; Seibold & Kang, 2008; Sheng, Tian, & Chen, 2010; Spiro, 2011). Carew et al. (2010) and Spiro (2011) explained that high performing teams have a mission, or purpose. As well, the members of successful teams share a common vision (Seibold & Kang, 2008), agree upon common values and norms (Carew et al., 2010), and work from goals that include tasks and timelines (O’Neill & Conzenius, 2006; Spiro, 2011). High-performing teams also operate from carefully developed processes (Seibold & Kang, 2008). For example, Spiro (2011) explained that successful teams keep planning sheets and minutes from team meetings to keep track of their history that ultimately saves time that would otherwise be wasted because of memory loss or turnover (Spiro, 2011). The structure of the highest performing teams also includes team roles, or responsibilities (Seibold & Kang, 2008; Spiro, 2011). Finally, members of the highest performing teams possess the knowledge they need to find the resources necessary to get their jobs done (Carew et al., 2010).

The highest performing teams conduct themselves in many of the same ways (Carew et al., 2010; Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Seibold & Kang, 2008; Sheng et al., 2010). Carew et al. (2010) shared that on high-performing teams everyone is a leader. In fact, Hoegl and Parboteeah (2006), in their study of 430 people on 145 teams, showed that the quality of decisions made by a team increases when team members have a more equal influence over the decisions that are made. Team members know how to manage conflict, develop ways to improve, and remain open and ready for changes as new situations arise (Carew et al., 2010). These individuals can build and maintain relationships with their teammates (Seibold & Kang, 2008) because they are more concerned with the greater good than with individual accomplishments (Carew et al., 2010). Therefore, team members value each other’s ideas and allow the best ideas to win (Maxwell, 2009). High performing teams possess high morale and high productivity because they are empowered to do their jobs (Carew et al., 2010). Lastly, these teams celebrate their accomplishments as a team and as individuals (Carew et al., 2010; Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Sheng et al., 2010).

The highest performing teams have a strong sense of trust, so it is important to the team (Fisher, 2007; Martin, 2006; Palanski, Kahai, & Yammarino, 2011; Perrin & Blauth, 2010; Sheng et al., 2010; Spiro, 2011). In fact, Sheng et al. (2010) stated “trust is critical within a team” (p. 1299). Ding and Ng (2007) defined trust as follows:

Trust [is] the willingness of one party, with a risk awareness that anticipates negative outcomes to be greater than favourable expectations, to be vulnerable to the actions of the other party in an environment of mutuality, which is situational and person specific. (p. 1106)

This vulnerability is essential to the success of any team, because teams require positive relationships if they are going to reach their goals (Fisher, 2007). A lack of trust within a team is anti-productive, leading to wasted time and money (Martin, 2006). Martin (2006) informed readers that organizations should actively foster trust-building. This process should include using teams to drive improvements and offer appropriate professional development (Martin, 2006).

Another characteristic of effective teams is that they learn together systematically (Langley et al., 2009; Randolph &
Blanchard, 2010). Blanchard and Blanchard (2010) indicated that teams exist for the purpose of learning and using new information in the process of moving forward. Langley et al. (2009) agreed and described this cycle of learning and using new information to move forward as a “PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) Cycle” (p. 24). According to Langley et al. (2009), successful implementation of new, proven ideas for the purpose of creating positive changes is cyclic and begins with a plan executed first on a small scale. In a PDSA cycle, the planning phase requires asking questions and making predictions. The doing phase requires attempting the plan and recording data during the process. The studying phase involves learning from the data and comparing the data to predictions. Finally, the acting phase requires moving forward based on what was learned. The cycle may need to repeat before the change is implemented (Langley et al., 2009).

PLC literature agreed with the general literature with respect to the need for effective teamwork (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2007; Wood, 2007). PLCs work because of teacher interactions (Fullan, 2007). Because the work of the teachers has the biggest impact on children, collaborative culture matters (Wood, 2007). Teachers cannot work alone and accomplish goals; they need to work together every day (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008; Fullan, 2007). R. P. DuFour and Eaker (1998) told readers that teachers must collaborate continuously, and they must always be learning.

There are several indications given in the PLC research regarding how teams of teachers should collaborate (DuFour, R. P., 2007; DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010; DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008; Nelson et al., 2010; Wood, 2007). First, teachers should operate within a set of norms, or rules (Wood, 2007), because they help establish trust within the team (Nelson et al., 2010). Secondly, teachers should work to reach consensus on issues together by sharing and voting until the general opinion of the group is evident (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008). Conversations within the team should always focus on student learning, not on teaching (Nelson et al., 2010), and interventions should be in place for each group to help students who are not learning (DuFour, R. P., 2007). These interventions can include “additional time [and]... additional support” (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010, p. 83).

According to the PLC literature, there are benefits to teacher collaboration (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010; Fullan, 2007). R. P. DuFour and R. DuFour (2010) told readers that teacher collaboration fosters shared responsibility for goals and breaks down isolation. Also, Fullan (2007) explained that collaboration improves teachers’ situations, effectively decreasing burnout. Therefore, teachers, like members of other organizations, should collaborate together.

Like other teams in other organizations, PLC teams work together systematically. R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) explained that the work of a collaborative team of teachers should focus on what the students should know, how teachers will know when the students have learned, and what to do about students who either do not learn or learn at higher levels. Similarly to Langley et al.’s (2009) PDSA cycle, Nelson et al. (2010) advised teachers to use an inquiry cycle to do their important work. This inquiry cycle included focus, implementation, and analysis. The focus, or goals, of a professional team should be broad enough to reach all group members (Nelson et al., 2010), should be concerned with deeper learning (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010) and should draw on outside research and resources (Nelson et al., 2010). Implementation involves carrying out the steps to reach the goals (Nelson et al., 2010). Nelson et al. (2010) explained that, after implementation, an analysis of the results following data collection is imperative because analysis of the data provides the opportunity for teams to determine their position relative to the goals and then redirect accordingly. The cycle then repeats.

e. PLC Case Studies

Despite roadblocks, several schools showed marked improvements in academic achievement as a result of their focused participation in PLCs (DuFour, R. P., & DuFour, R., 2010; Garcia, 2009; Schmoker, 2001). Milwaukee Public Schools in Wisconsin showed increased achievement in math, reading, and science in 1998 as a result of their “clear standards, focused teaming, and goal-oriented, data-driven structures” (Schmoker, 2001, p. 31), all of which are components of PLCs. Schmoker (2001) also reports Adlai Stevenson High School District as a success story. Between 1985 and 1996, “they raised achievement in every measurable category” (Schmoker, 2001, p. 9). More recently, R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) wrote Granby Memorial High School in Granby, Connecticut, increased achievement in all areas of its state testing and by nearly 40 points on the SAT composite because of the school’s work in PLCs. Lastly, Garcia (2009) reported Whittemore Union High School District increased student achievement dramatically over the past five years due to its work as a PLC.

Despite some case studies of success, PLC results noted in the literature and in relationship to academic achievement are mixed. Servage (2009) argued that PLCs removed the creativity from collaboration because “the learning content is largely pre-determined” (p. 166). Servage concluded “that PLC learning presently embraces technical and managerial dimensions of teachers’ work at the expense of craft knowledge and critical perspectives” (p. 149), limiting teachers. In a study of 115 Pennsylvania high schools whose principals reported implementing PLCs, Varano (2010) found no relationship between PLCs and math or communication arts achievement as measured by state assessment data. In a similar study, Beres (2007) examined the relationship between PLC maturity level and student achievement in 24 secondary Alberta schools in a study that followed a four-year implementation of PLCs at those schools. Beres (2007) found that, after four years, schools were still working toward becoming mature PLCs. Additionally, Beres (2007) found no gains in standardized English assessment scores and only slight gains in social studies scores.

f. Change Roadblocks

It is this author’s conclusion that PLCs are a synthesis of the general literature with respect to best practices in any organization. Therefore, it makes sense that using these practices would promote positive change in any educational setting. So why, then, aren’t research successes consistent? Literature indicates several possibilities.
One such reason is that many of the mistakes that stifle the change process are due to inadequate leadership (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Spiro, 2011; Zigarmi et al., 2010). Leaders fail in their planning efforts (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008) when they do not dedicate all resources to only a limited number of focused goals (Zigarmi et al., 2010). Zigarmi et al. (2010) found organizations fail in their change process when leaders do not pilot efforts, measure their progress by collecting data, or involve themselves fully in the implementation process. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) found that change efforts fail when the time spent on the effort becomes too great. When morale suffers because leaders do not understand the culture, do not take time to alleviate concerns, fail to involve all stakeholders, or lose credibility, change processes are not likely to be successful (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Zigarmi et al., 2010). Finally, inadequate leadership includes choosing into an implementation without taking time to assess the needs thoroughly (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Spiro, 2011; Zigarmi et al., 2010).

Sometimes successful change fails because the people in the organization do not support it (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Zigarmi et al., 2010). One reason for lack of support is that the people are not convinced the leaders are committed to the change long term (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Another reason people refuse to support a change effort is if they do not agree with the chosen method of change, or if they see a loss or no benefit to themselves for participating (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). A final reason for lack of support is a failure of people to believe they have the skills to make the change happen (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Zigarmi et al., 2010).

There are several ways that teamwork can be negatively affected, leading to conflict that stifles change (Carew et al., 2010; Chan & Chen, 2010; Perrin & Blauth, 2010; Sharma, Roychowdhury, & Verma, 2009). A study of 104 students in eight teams led Sharma et al. (2009) to conclude that teams dysfunction when there are too many different perspectives, when they are too big, and when there is no emotional attachment to the team. Conflict also results when there is ineffective communication (Chan & Chen, 2010) and negative reinforcement that leads to distrust (Perrin & Blauth, 2010). Poor leaders who treat their teammates unequally and self-centered teammates who put their needs above the team also induce conflict (Chan & Chen, 2010; Sharma et al., 2009). Finally, researchers agreed that a major source of team conflict and dysfunction is confusion about or lack of vision and goals (Carew et al., 2010; Chan & Chen, 2010; Sharma et al., 2009). These problems will persist if teams lack the ability to resolve conflict (Carew et al., 2010).

There are similar leadership and team challenges associated with becoming a PLC (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2007; Servage, 2009; Wells & Feun, 2007; Wood, 2007). One common mistake schools make is to take on too many goals at one time or to make their goals too general (DuFour, R. P., & Eaker, 1998). Another hurdle, according to Fullan (2007), is the difficult role of the leader in facilitating change. In a study of an urban school, Wood (2007) reported that most faculty members struggled with time availability and with a focus on student learning in their collaborative groups. A study of six high schools by Wells and Feun (2007) also revealed that teachers felt a collaborative focus on student learning was difficult. They preferred to spend their collaborative time sharing plans and ideas (Wells & Feun, 2007).

**Conclusion**

The author concluded that successful, sustainable change cannot occur without developing a mission and vision, identifying values and goals, implementing strong leadership, and focusing teamwork to transform culture. Since the author concluded the PLC concept is a synthesis of the general literature associated with instituting sustainable change in an organization, she was anxious to evaluate student outcomes following the implementation of PLCs in the Midwest School District.

### 3. Methods and Results

Prior to beginning this study, written permission was obtained by the researcher from the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum at Midwest School District to use secondary data for this study. Then, documentation of processes used at Midwest High School were gathered; these included committee notes, faculty meeting minutes, reports to the principal, reports to the school board, and PowerPoint presentations.

**a. Research Question One**

To address research question one, three student achievement measures were statistically evaluated. As the initial measure, first semester ninth grade report cards from the high school were analyzed for the fall of 2005–2010. From each population, a random sample of 50 student report cards was chosen using an online random sampling tool (Social Psychology Network, 2008). Each report card was classified as Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic. Advanced report cards were those containing only grades of A and B. Proficient report cards were those containing only grades of A, B, and C. Basic report cards were those containing one D or F. Below Basic report cards were those containing two or more Ds or Fs. For each population, the percentage of students with each type of report card was calculated and put into a table. Then, a chi-square test for homogeneity of proportions (Bluman, 2010) was conducted applying an alpha level of 0.05 to determine if the proportions for the years 2005–2010 were statistically different. If there was a statistical difference, the chi-square calculation would be higher than the critical value for this test and the evidence would be present to suggest rejection of the null hypothesis. The critical value for this test was 24.996. The chi-square value was 20.928. Since 20.928 was less than the critical value of 24.996, there was not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

A second set of student achievement data that was analyzed was student scores on common semester one final exams for Algebra I, American Government, English I, and Biology. For each course, a convenience sample (Bluman, 2010) was gathered consisting of student scores earned by percentage during December 2010 and December 2011. From each of
these samples, the researcher randomly chose 30 scores using an online random sampling tool (Social Psychology Network, 2008), and the average exam score for each of the eight groups was calculated. Then, a z-test comparing two means (Bluman, 2010) was conducted for each of the above courses using an alpha level of 0.05. If there was a statistically significant increase in average scores between 2010 and 2011, then evidence would be present to suggest rejection of the null hypothesis. For hypotheses two through five, the researcher failed to reject the null hypotheses. There was not enough evidence to support a measurable increase in average scores for the courses Algebra I, American Government, Biology, or English II on the semester one common final exam between December 2009 and December 2010.

A third set of student achievement data was analyzed; the Missouri State EOC Exam scores for English II, Algebra, and Biology, which were offered and administered for the first time in 2009. Teachers gave these exams yearly in April to students completing the English II, Algebra, or Biology courses, respectively. Student scores were categorized as Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic. School districts in Missouri were graded against achievement targets on the total percentage of students scoring in the Advanced and Proficient categories. Scores and progress toward achievement targets were typically available to schools and districts during October in the same year following the April exams (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010c).

To analyze EOC Exam scores, assessment data from 2009 and 2011 were compared. For each test in each year, the researcher randomly chose 40 scores using an online random sampling tool (Social Psychology Network, 2008). Then, a z-test comparing two proportions (Bluman, 2010) was conducted for the English II, Algebra, and Biology EOC Exams using an alpha level of 0.05. If there was a statistically significant increase in proportion of students who achieved Advanced and Proficient between 2009 and 2011, then evidence would be present to suggest rejection of the null hypothesis. For hypothesis eight, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. There was not enough evidence to support a measurable increase in proportion of students who achieved Advanced and Proficient on the English II Missouri State End of Course Exam between May 2009 and May 2011. For hypotheses six and seven, the researcher rejected the null hypotheses. There was enough evidence to support a measurable increase in proportion of students who achieved Advanced and Proficient on the Biology and Algebra I Missouri State End of Course Exams between May 2009 and May 2011.

b. Research Question Two

In October 2006, a paper survey was given at a faculty meeting by the PLC Leadership Team to the teachers in this school. The goal was to gather baseline data prior to the changes that were going to take place. As a part of the survey, teachers were asked to report their opinions about current curriculum rigor, public image, quality of education, and post–high school preparedness on a four point scale. This same survey was given to the teaching staff again in April 2011. Surveys were collected and tallied by members of the PLC Leadership Team. Survey results were organized and recorded by the researcher and then compared using a Likert-like scale analysis for trends to determine if there were any changes in teacher attitudes between 2006 and 2011.

In October 2006 and April 2011, the faculty at the school study site was asked to respond to survey questions on four topics using a Likert-like scale. The first statement measured teacher perception of curriculum rigor, for which positive responses increased from 91.0% to 94.2%. The second statement measured teacher belief in the perception regarding a positive high school public image, for which positive responses increased from 67.6% to 77.0%. The third statement measured teacher perception regarding the quality of education provided by the high school, for which positive responses increased from 75.0% to 90.7%. The fourth statement measured teacher perception regarding the high school’s ability to prepare students for post–high school experiences, for which positive responses increased from 67.7% to 94.0%. These results are shown graphically in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Teachers’ Self-Reported Positive Attitudes from 2006 to 2011

c. Research Question Three
In April 2011, a paper survey was given at a faculty meeting by the PLC Leadership Team to the teaching staff in Midwest High School. According to Hord et al. (1999), this survey was developed in 1996 at SEDL. SEDL is “a private, nonprofit education research, development, and dissemination (RD&D) corporation based in Austin, Texas [that is dedicated to] improving teaching and learning” (SEDL, 2011, para. 1). This survey, called School Professional Staff as Learning Community Questionaire, contained 17 descriptors grouped into five areas: principal shared leadership and decision making, shared vision of commitment to student learning, collective learning to address student needs, peer feedback of teacher classroom practices, and school conditions supporting PLCs. For each of the five areas, the positive Likert-like scale responses were averaged. In the area of principal shared leadership and decision-making, the average of the positive responses was 84.0%. In the area of shared vision of commitment to student learning, the average of the positive responses was 78.0%. In the area of collective learning to address student needs, the average of the positive responses was 69.4%. In the area of peer feedback of teacher classroom practices, the average of the positive responses was 25.0%. In the area of school conditions support PLCs, the average of the positive responses was 57.7%. These results are shown graphically in Figure 2. Since the current research did not identify a percentage that would classify schools as mature PLCs, the researcher chose 80% as a cutoff for discussion purposes.

Figure 2. Percentage of Teachers Responding Positively to Each Area of the PLC Diagnostic Tool. Adapted from "Issues... about Change," by S. Hord, M. Meehan, S. Orletsky, and B. Sattes, 1999. Retrieved from www.sedl.org

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct an evaluation of student academic outcomes following the five year implementation of PLCs in Midwest High School. Though the researcher ultimately concluded that Midwest High School is not yet a mature PLC, several insights were made into strengths and weaknesses in the faculty’s implementation process. Based on the study, recommendations were made to move Midwest High School toward becoming a mature PLC, and the implications of this study on other high schools was addressed. Finally, the researcher described two other studies that would add to the available literature on PLCs in high schools.

a. Research Question One

The first part of research question one asked if student achievement increased during the course of PLC implementation from 2006–2011. Six of the eight hypotheses showed no statistically measurable increases in student outcomes. However, trends in student outcomes were promising. For instance, hypotheses two through eight all showed increases in student outcomes. Additionally, data utilized in hypothesis one showed a downward trend in the percentage of students earning Below Basic Report Cards. These trends could indicate a positive shift in student achievement that will continue following the conclusion of this study.

The second part of research question one asked if increases in student achievement could be attributed to the implementation of PLCs from 2006 to 2011. This researcher believed that increases in student achievement could be tied to PLC implementation. PLC implementation encompassed nearly all building-based and external professional development between 2006 and 2011. As a part of this professional development, teams were formed and given time and direction for collaborating together. Common tests and EOC exams were utilized and discussions regarding student achievement at the item-level followed. Time, collaboration, and the utilization of common assessments, are all components of PLCs (DuFour, R. P., et al., 2008). Since the research noted that the right professional development is essential to a successful change process (Chan & Chen, 2010; De Jong & Elfing, 2010; Ding & Ng, 2010; Locander & Luechauer, 2009), positive changes in student outcomes are in part a result of the PLC professional development that was provided to the faculty.

b. Research Questions Two and Three

For research question two, the percentages of teachers responding positively increased in all categories from 2006 to 2011. The highest increase in teacher attitude, 26.3%, was in student preparedness for post-high school experiences. Satisfaction with the quality of education offered was second. The smallest increases in teacher perception included public image and curriculum rigor, with curriculum rigor increasing only 3.2%. However, curriculum rigor may have had the smallest increase because it was the highest score in 2006. In fact, in 2011 it was also the highest score, with 94.2% of teachers responding positively.
For research question three, principal shared leadership and decision-making (84% positive responses) is the only area that met the researcher-chosen cutoff for classification as a mature PLC. The researcher concluded based on this information that, though Midwest High School had several strengths, it did not yet represent a mature PLC.

In triangulating the three research questions, several trends became clear. Two of the lowest percentages, peer feedback of teacher classroom practices (25% positive responses) and collective learning to address student needs (69.4% positive responses), may give insight to the reason why, in research question one, the researcher failed to reject six of eight null hypotheses. If PLC teams, according to teacher perception, were not focusing the majority of their time and efforts or were not focusing those efforts correctly on student needs and the instructional strategies to support them, then it makes sense that student outcomes did not increase as hoped.

The low percentage of positive responses to peer feedback of teacher classroom practices could indicate the collective focus of PLC teams did not adequately address instructional strategies. When considering this with the high curriculum rigor reported in research question two, it became clear that PLC teams were ready for this step, because a focus on curriculum should precede the development of planned lessons in order to reach a pre-determined destination (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In the case of Midwest High School, teacher perceptions indicated that a focus on increasing curriculum rigor took place but not a focus on subsequent instructional strategies. This is consistent with the lack of measurable increases in final exam scores seen in research question one. Even though average exam scores increased in all four areas studied, these increases were not statistically significant; this indicated the need for additional work on instructional strategies.

The neglect of peer review of instructional strategies could explain the failure to see a measurable increase in common assessment scores as found in hypotheses two through five in research question one. Teachers were not given release time to observe one another teaching in their classrooms. If the teachers’ focus was on the curriculum but not on the resulting instructional strategies, it made sense that summative assessment scores did not measurably increase. After all, how could the end result be expected to change if the steps leading up to that end result were never modified?

Only 57.7% of teachers responded positively that school conditions at Midwest High School support PLCs. This could be because of limited PLC meeting times as only two hours per month were worked into the schedule for most PLC teams to meet, with only a few PLC teams sharing a common plan time. Perceptions about school conditions could also have resulted from the level of trust and positive relationships among staff members. Similar reasons for teacher perceptions of public image at Midwest High School as described in research question two could exist, but further information would have to be gathered to determine if a correlation exists. However, based on these responses and on the failure to reject six of eight null hypotheses in research question one, the researcher concluded that the culture was still transforming at Midwest High School even though there was cause to celebrate some success. More researched-based work needs to be done in the areas of teamwork and professional development in order to truly create the successful, sustainable change desired by Midwest High School.

c. Recommendations for Midwest High School

This study revealed that strengths of Midwest High School following the implementation of PLCs included several components. The measurable improvement of Algebra I and Biology Missouri EOC scores were a highlight for research question one. Also, positive trends in final exam scores for the courses investigated were promising. Additionally, the decrease in the percentage of Below Basic freshmen report cards provided hope for a continuation in this trend and subsequent measurably significant results in the future. The results of research question two indicated that a rigorous curriculum and post–high school preparedness were strengths. Finally, shared decision making by leadership was reported as a great strength in research question three.

Though several strengths were revealed, the researcher concluded that Midwest High School was not yet a mature PLC and that more work needed to be done before successful, sustainable change was accomplished. Based on the results of this study, the researcher concluded that additional work needs to be done in teams and with professional development before the goal of becoming a mature PLC can be realized.

One focus area of Midwest High School should be the development of the PLC teams. Based on research question three, school conditions were not supporting PLCs fully. The researcher speculated that this could have been due to time available to PLCs, trust and relationships among and between PLCs, having some of the wrong people in place, or a combination of all three. One priority would be to evaluate the effectiveness of each team member and look at making tough staffing decisions. Another team priority is the building of trust. The highest performing teams build and maintain trust so it cannot be neglected (Fisher, 2007; Martin, 2006; Palanski et al., 2011; Perrin & Blauth, 2010; Sheng et al., 2010; Spiro, 2011). The researcher concluded that time is another priority. Teams had, during the time of this study, two hours of scheduled time per month to work together. It is the researcher’s belief that this is not nearly enough time for trust building and other PLC work that needs to be taking place. More time needs to be built into the schedule.

By triangulating findings for the three research questions in the previous section, the researcher was able to
identify a number of areas in which teams should be focusing their work. One of these areas is in the
development of a curriculum that clearly identifies “the specific understandings [the PLC team is] after and what
such understandings look like in practice” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 15). Even though teacher perception
was that curriculum rigor was high, discussions involving the curriculum were critical in helping students
achieve the goals teachers set for them. Another area in which teams should be focusing their work is the
development of common formative assessments for each course (Ainsworth, 2007; DuFour, R. P., 2007).
According to Aisworth (2007), common formative assessments will arm PLC teams with data necessary to
predict how students are likely to perform on the common summative exams. Therefore, the creation of
common formative assessments and the subsequent use of those assessments to give evidence for changes in
instruction are essential to the ultimate learning levels of the students. A third area on which teams should be
focusing their work is the development of course level interventions. R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) reported that
teams should know what to do when a student does not learn. Though building-wide Midwest High School has
an answer to this question, PLC teams for each course should have had a detailed plan to insure that all
students learn. A final area in which teams should focus is on the assignment of roles (Seibold & Kang, 2008;
Spiro, 2011).

Professional development should be a focus area of Midwest High School. According to Fisher (2007) and
Gajda and Koliba (2008), teams need professional development on how to collaborate with each other.
Additionally, PLC teams should have training on how to use their common formative assessments to inform
their instruction. Finally, subject-specific professional development should be provided so that teachers
continue to be confident in the ever-changing content in their fields of instruction. Carew et al. (2010) reported
that high performing teams have the knowledge they need to get their jobs done. This is the only way to get
teachers to support the changes necessary to become a mature PLC, because teachers cannot support
changes unless they are confident they have the skills to make them successful (Armenakis & Harris, 2009;
Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Zigarmi et al., 2010).

Additional work with teams and professional development will be futile without a way to monitor progress; there
are several ways to accomplish this. Interviews conducted by an outside party or a series of anonymous, open-
ended survey questions would be a good way to gather information from teachers. Initially, questions could
focus on answering the following:

- What did the Algebra I and Biology PLCs do to achieve measurable differences in the results of their
  Missouri EOC Exams?
- Were math and science staff survey scores better than the rest of the staff survey scores? Are these or
  other departments functioning as mature PLCs?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of courses and departments that were not a part of this study?
- What additional information is there regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the courses and
departments that were a part of this study?
- Why was there a teacher perception of gaps in collaborative learning to address student needs, peer
feedback of teacher classroom practices, school conditions supporting PLCs, and public image? What do
teachers think should be done to close the gaps?

The answers to these questions, along with the team and professional development recommendations
described above, provided a plan for Midwest High School to move forward. When they are ready, the staff of
Midwest High School should again evaluate their status as a mature PLC by repeating the School Professional
Staff as Learning Community Questionnaire that was used in research question three (Hord et al., 1999).

d. Implications and Future Studies

Since PLCs mirror research on best practices for successful, sustainable change in any organization,
implementation of PLCs in a high school setting should, in theory, result in increased student achievement.
However, this is not always the case. The researcher believes there could be several reasons for this. First,
teachers and administrators could get caught up in process instead of product. For instance, they could create
superfluous meeting notes and meaningless goals instead of pushing quickly past the logistics to the hard
conversations that make a difference for the students. Maybe there is a best way to quickly and efficiently
implement PLCs so that student benefits are immediate. A study that focused on the best way to implement
PLCs would add to the current literature by providing high schools more direction and perhaps shortening the
amount of time it takes high schools to see measurable results which would definitely benefit students.

Another possibility is that the structure of the United States’ educational system as a whole is outdated.
Perhaps there is something fundamentally flawed in the ways that grade levels are organized, staff is recruited,
and time is distributed. It might be these flaws that inhibit the effects of good leadership and teamwork on the
achievement of the students. While these ideas were not addressed in detail in this study, the author intends to
explore them in future literature reviews and studies. Other countries are doing it better (Baldi et al., 2007;
Emeagwali, 2010; Fleischman et al., 2010). International journals, then, would be a good place to start.

e. Conclusions

The purpose of education is to provide assistance to students so they may achieve results, and results come
when a faculty is able to undergo successful, sustainable change in their school. R. P. DuFour et al. (2008) provided a description of PLCs that not only mirrored the current literature on organizations' best practices for creating successful, sustainable change but put it into an educational context. Though the road to increased student achievement through successful, sustainable change is not straight or smooth, the researcher believes that educators have an obligation to find a way. PLCs, though not a specific set of directions, provided the initial tools that educators would need to reach their destination: increased student achievement. However, they are not the only tools needed. It is up to educators to find the rest.

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**Related Items:**

- Figure 1. Teachers' Self-Reported Positive Attitudes from 2006 to 2011
- Figure 2. Percentage of Teachers Responding Positively to Each Area of the PLC Diagnostic Tool. Adapted from "Issues... about Change," by S. Hord, M. Meehan, S. Orletsky, and B. Sattes, 1999. Retrieved from www.sedl.org
- Article References
University Presidents’ Perspectives of the Knowledge and Competencies Needed in 21st Century Higher Education Leadership

by Sydney Freeman, Jr. and Frances K. Kochan

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the core knowledge and competencies needed for executive leadership in higher education administration as perceived by university presidents. Thirteen presidents shared the knowledge and competencies they perceived as being essential for an effective presidency. The respondents identified the important knowledge areas as: foundational; acquisition of cultural knowledge; and complex cognitive. They viewed personal attributes, management, and communications as the essential competency areas. The study found that presidents viewed themselves both as leaders and as managers.

Results of this study should be helpful to organizations seeking to develop and/or implement degree programs to prepare individuals for the presidency. The results may also be helpful to those seeking to provide professional development materials and activities to prepare or develop individuals for this role.

1. Introduction

Higher education programs prepare potential higher education administrators, faculty, and policymakers (Wright, 2007). There have been attempts to develop and adopt common requirements or core course requirements for the master’s degree within some of these programs (ASHE, 2010; CAS, 2006). For example, in 2006, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) adopted a set of student affairs master’s level preparation standards. In 2010, the Association for the Study of Higher Education’s Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs (ASHE) adopted a set of guidelines for Higher Education Administration and Leadership Preparation Programs at the Master’s Degree Level. However, similar guidelines or standards have not been developed for higher education administration or leadership doctoral programs (ASHE, 2010).

Fifty-eight percent of sitting university presidents in United States are over the age of 61 (ACE, 2012). This has led higher education researchers to predict a surge of retirements resulting in a large number of openings for university presidencies across the country in the years ahead. In the past 10 years, many searches have turned to sitting college presidents as the primary pool of applicants. Due to the age of many sitting presidents, that pool may not be as convenient an option in the future (Farrington, 2008).

Presidents in higher education come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are from the corporate world, some from public service and some from the academic realm. However, academic credentials continue to be important when selecting presidents, particularly in research institutions. The primary way non–higher education employees become president at a research university is that they bring extraordinary accomplishments or notoriety (e.g., scholarly or political or management reputations) to the university. Examining this issue, Burton (2003) found that generally, becoming a president at a research university, especially at a more prestigious institution, is a highly structured process and includes issues such as where the doctorate degree was earned and where academic and administrative experience was obtained.
The combination of the pending retirements of presidents and the fact that it appears that most university presidencies require some form of a terminal degree makes it important to gain information about the knowledge and competencies needed for success from the perspective of those already in the position. Such information will assist institutions preparing future higher education leaders to assure that their programs are well grounded and meet the needs of the presidents of this century.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the core knowledge and competencies needed for executive leadership in higher education administration as perceived by university presidents. University presidents involved were those who had earned a doctoral degree with a specialization in higher education administration and who were leading four-year institutions. The research question addressed was, “What are the core knowledge and competencies needed for executive leadership in higher education administration as perceived by university presidents?”

It is hoped that the findings will inform the work of higher education program faculty and curriculum developers as they seek to prepare students for executive leadership positions in higher education. The results should also help administrators, curriculum developers, and faculty associated with higher education administrations programs and educational leadership institutes to better understand higher education students’ needs.

The University Presidency

Since the election of the first American college president in 1640—Henry Dunster of Harvard College—the position of president has been one of extreme responsibility and high visibility. The university presidency is a position that is very complex and important. Luxton (2005) writes,

By being the chief spokesperson for institutional strategy, the chief executive officer gives credibility to agreed (upon) plans. Although other individuals may lead at key points in development and implementation of the process, the chief executive officer is understood to speak for the whole institution. (p. 12)

The role of the president is both substantive and symbolic. McLaughlin and Riesman (1996) put it succinctly when they wrote that presidents serve as the “living logo” of their institutions. Presidents speak and represent multiple constituencies associated with their universities. Although presidents are ultimately accountable to the board, they generally like to chart their own courses. Dubois (2006) notes, “College presidents are an extraordinary group of professionals. They are highly competent and competitive, and basically, they want to be left alone” (p. 96).

The role of the university president may be changing, however. Roach (2000) cites Dr. Michael Lomax, president of the United Negro College Fund, who commented, “I think that college boards are viewing the job of president more as a CEO than as a pure education position” (p. 24). In the same article Roach (2000) cites Dr. George Ayers, president of Ayers and Associates, a northern Virginia-based higher education management consulting and executive search firm, as saying, “Boards are also seeking candidates who have demonstrated that they have fund-raising skills and can win assistance for their school from corporations and foundations” (p. 24). These ideas may be changing the knowledge, competencies, and skills needed by academics as they serve in their presidential roles, making it increasingly important to identify the abilities that will be needed for entry-level administrators in this position to assure their future success (Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007).

Community College Presidents

Although there have been several studies dedicated to the training of leaders through higher education programs (Altach, 2010; Altbach, Bozeman, & Janashia, 2007; Barnett, 2007; Dressel & Mayhew, 1974; Fife & Goodchild, 1991; Kienle & Loyd, 2005; Wang, 2010; Wright & Miller, 2007), there is a lack of literature that addresses the value of higher education doctoral programs in preparing university presidents. One study by Hammons and Miller (2006) investigated community college presidents’ perceptions of their preparation programs and sought suggestions for improvement. Findings indicated that although preparation programs were highly regarded by their graduates, they also stated that these programs needed to do a better job of interacting with the practitioner community and using real-world cases in their instruction.

Student Affairs Leadership

Another body of research that informed this study comes from the area of student affairs. Research related to the efficacy of graduate programs in student affairs has been conducted since the initial academic preparation programs began at Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1913 (Wilson, 2012). During the past 30 years, there has been a debate related to which particular coursework has been the most effective in transferring knowledge, developing skills, and defining characteristics essential to successful practice. One of the studies most pertinent to this research was conducted by Sandeen in 1982. This researcher completed a national survey of 219 chief student affairs officers to assess, review, and update their perceptions of their graduate preparation programs. Sandeen reported that senior student affairs officers thought many programs were too oriented toward counseling, and they suggested that internship opportunities should be expanded and that more courses in legal issues, budgeting, and management needed to be offered.

Another important study dealing with student affairs program curriculum was conducted by Kiem (1991). In a longitudinal study of 47 doctoral, specialist, and master’s programs, Kiem found that many programs had fewer faculty and students than their counterparts within the same department, fewer programs requiring the master’s thesis, and a lack of courses in...
student personnel.

The study that most closely aligns with the objectives of this study was conducted by Herdlein (2004). This study reviewed the opinions of chief student affairs officers at 50 colleges/universities regarding the degree to which they believed that student affairs graduate programs adequately prepared new professionals. He focused his study on three primary categories in higher education curriculum, which included foundational studies, professional studies, and supervised practice. He asserted, “Over a period of 36 years, a variety of studies have addressed issues important to changing conditions in the academy including suggestions to move preparation programs from a counseling emphasis to include a more administrative and management focus” (p. 56). He further noted that this change had been a function of the perceived need for higher education programs to develop leaders that master fundamental areas of management such as budgeting, leadership, and fundraising. Herdlein concluded that it was unclear whether graduate programs in student affairs had been satisfactory in preparing student affairs administrators for the rapidly changing environment of higher education.

Herdlein (2004) provided the following implications for the student affairs profession: (1) There is a need for research carefully delineating competencies needed for successful practice; (2) Demonstrating competencies and evaluating learning outcomes may call for additional methodologies including the use of portfolios and competency-based practicum and graduate assistantships; and (3) All of the various knowledge and skill sets perceived to be lacking in new professionals need to be addressed in curricular offerings, teaching subject matter across the curriculum, and developing ways to encourage professional development and life-long learning as an integral part of the student affairs profession (p. 69).

**ACE: Pathway to the Presidency Study**

Although little research has been done on university presidents’ perceptions of the important knowledge and competencies required for their jobs and the role of their graduate programs in preparing them for their positions, the American Council of Education (ACE) has been conducting presidential surveys to gather college demographic and other data since 1986. The most recent study was published in 2012 (ACE, 2012). This appears to be the only comprehensive source of demographic data on college and university presidents from all sectors of American higher education (ACE, 2012). Questions have been adapted and refined throughout this 25-year period.

The first survey was administered to describe the backgrounds, career paths, and experiences of college and university presidents (ACE, 2012). The most recent study used *The College President’s Survey* to gather information from presidents regarding their education, career paths and length of service, as well as personal characteristics such as age, marital status, and religious affiliation. Over 1600 individuals responded to the survey. Respondents were asked about the importance of 17 competency areas: (1) Academic issues (e.g., curriculum changes), (2) Accountability/assessment of student learning, (3) Athletics, (4) Budget/financial management, (5) Capital improvement projects, (6) Community relations, (7) Crisis management, (8) Enrollment management, (9) Entrepreneurial ventures, (10) Faculty issues, (11) Fund raising, (12) Governing board relations, (13) Government relations, (14) Media/public relations, (15) Personnel issues (excluding faculty), (16) Risk management/legal issues, and (17) Strategic planning. These competencies were developed and refined over 20 years through interviews and feedback from college and university presidents (ACE, 2012; J. King, personal communication, September 4, 2010).

### 3. Methods

Although this was primarily a qualitative study, the population and the initial interview questions were derived from the 2007 edition of the ACE study of presidents. The data sample selection and data collection and analysis processes used are described in the sections that follow.

**Phase Population and Sample Selection**

The population for this study was derived from the 1,647 college and university presidents affiliated with the American Council of Education, as identified on the council’s organizational website (American Council of Education, 2010, para. 1). The sample was culled by identifying only presidents who served institutions whose name included the word “university,” differentiating them from those whose name contained the word “college,” and included only presidents who received a degree in higher education administration. This selection process was conducted to bring consistency to the study sample. This sample selection resulted in a population of 150 presidents.

These 150 university presidents were solicited via email or phone to participate in the study. Of these 150, thirteen presidents agreed to participate. There were several reasons presidents were unable to participate, including a lack of time, a lack of interest, they were not university presidents, or they did not have a doctoral degree in higher education administration. All presidents were actively serving in their position at the time of their interviews. Of the thirteen participants, three were females and ten were males. Three African American presidents, who serve as the heads of Historically Black Universities, participated in the study. All ten of the other presidents were caucasian and served in Predominantly White Universities. Five presidents served private religious institutions, and the eight other presidents led public serving institutions. The enrollment size of the institutions the presidents served ranged from less than 2,000 to more than 50,000 students. For purposes of this study, presidents’ names and their institutions were replaced with the names of pseudonyms to keep their responses anonymous. Table 1 presents detailed information about the characteristics of participating presidents.
Data Collection Processes

The findings presented are part of a three-part study examining the academic preparation of university presidents. The primary data source for this study was face-to-face interviews with the presidents. The literature review provided information from which ten initial interview questions were developed, piloted, and revised as described in the validity section of this manuscript. The same interview protocol was used during all the face-to-face interviews. Additional information was gathered from interviewees via email correspondence.

The researcher used the Life History Case Studies (LHCS) approach to gather background information about the participants. LHCS is a qualitative approach designed to help researchers gather background information about the study participants in order to understand the in-depth and comprehensive meanings in their lives (Campbell, 1999). The researcher initiated this process by gathering curriculum vitas and biographical sketches of interviewees prior to the interviews to confirm that the interviewers' description of their backgrounds corroborated with the other data sources. The researcher also collected demographic information about gender, ethnicity, institutional type, and home institution's geographic region.

Seven university presidents were interviewed at the 2010 ACE Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ on March 6–10, 2010. Interviews took place between the hours of 10:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Participants met the researcher in a meeting boardroom for the interview. The six other interviews were conducted on-site at the participants' home institution presidents' offices. These interviews lasted for approximately one (1) hour. Audio and video equipment were used for data collection purposes. Audiotaping and videotaping the interviews enabled the researcher to concentrate on questions asked and give his full attention to the interviewee. Copious and detailed notes were also taken during the interview. An interview script was used throughout the process.

Following the initial interview, the researcher reviewed the transcript and tape and constructed follow-up interview questions tailored to the individual president. These questions sought to clarify statements and assertions made by presidents in the initial interview. Follow-up interviews were conducted via email. Both rounds of interviews took place over a 5-month period.

Summary notes were recorded in a journal directly following each interview. The presidents' reactions and comments and preliminary thoughts on the emerging themes were recorded in a log as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984) and Gasman (2003). Both what the presidents said (i.e., their words and language) and what was unsaid (i.e., body language and long pauses) were considered when logging notes.

Data Analysis
The researcher used multiple data sources to confirm the data results (Yin, 2003). Using multiple sources enhanced the study by allowing for structural corroboration. Eisner (1998) describes structural corroboration as "the confluence of multiple sources of evidence or the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion" (p. 55). The sources the researcher used were field notes taken during participant interviews, memoing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Trochim, 2006) ideas developed during the research process, the audio and videotapes used during the interviews, and the email responses gathered from the follow-up interviews.

**Concerns for Internal/External Validity**

The researcher enlisted the expertise of an expert panel of three senior academic administrators and faculty to review pilot interview questions in order to gather evidence of content validity (Ross & Shannon, 2008). After making revisions based on the expert panel's responses, the researcher conducted field interviews with six academic administrators to further refine the questions. The researcher also conducted two focus-group interviews, which included both higher and adult education faculty and higher education administration students who were considered at "ABD" status. Information from both of these endeavors was used to finalize the interview questions.

After concluding the actual interviews with the presidential participants, follow-up email interviews were conducted for purposes of member checking and data validation. Member checking permitted the presidents to review the notations from the previous interview to ensure that they correctly reflected their feelings and responses (Creswell, 1998; Wolfe, 2010). The second interview process, conducted via email, allowed the researcher to conduct additional questioning related to the responses from the initial interview.

**Concerns for Reliability and Generalizability of Results**

Theory/perspective triangulation is described by Patton (2002) as using multiple lenses or theories to interpret the data. This process was completed during the data collection stage when the researcher used several conceptual frameworks to inform the data collection process, which included Stuver's (2006) student expectations, Fink's (2005) curriculum design, Hammon and Miller's (2006) presidential perceptions, and Herdlein's (2004) graduate preparation of new professionals. Those frameworks were used to provide a priori codes to inform the analysis process.

**Coding Process**

The researcher compiled a start list of codes to look for in the data from the literature review on curriculum development and presidential leadership. There were a total of 80 a priori codes that were found to be applicable to the study. These codes were numbered using recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994). The start list included: skills, knowledge, competency, program characteristics, development, curriculum, and professional development. As data were coded, recurring themes not included on the start list or in the relevant literature were coded as emerging codes. Codes that did not have data attached to them were dropped.

During the analysis process, the "coding incident to incident" approach advocated by Charmaz (2006) was implemented. This process allowed the researcher to compare like incidents experienced by different participants, helping to further corroborate ideas developed earlier in the coding process. These "axial" codes, which are codes that emerge out of the data, helped to solidify the identity of emergent properties. Emergent codes were compared to one another to further narrow down the amount of redundant codes and create substantive codes. The results of this process allowed for theoretical coding, which Charmaz (2006) describes as substantive codes being integrated together creating a theory.

**4. Findings**

Presidents identified three primary knowledge areas as essential for success in their position. They also identified three competency areas as critical: These are described in the sections that follow.

**Essential Knowledge**

In this study knowledge is defined as (1) higher education expertise acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical and or practical understanding of a subject in higher education; (2) what is known in a particular field or in total; or (3) facts and information needed for executive leadership in higher education administration (Oxford, 2011). Core knowledge areas presidents identified as essential for the presidency were: Foundational Knowledge (History of Higher Education and Finance); Knowledge Acquisition of Cultural Knowledge (Context and Public Image); and Complex Cognitive Knowledge. These are displayed in Table 2.
Foundational Knowledge

The first knowledge area presidents described as being a part of the core knowledge needed for executive leadership was foundational knowledge. Foundational knowledge is defined in this study as information that enabled presidents to have a basic understanding of higher education as a field. The foundational knowledge area was comprised of two elements (1) history of higher education, (2) and budgeting/finance.

History of Higher Education. More than half of the presidents believe that those who aspire to senior leadership should have a strong grasp of the history of higher education. Emelia Lily, a president of a small public university in the Northeastern region of the United States, shared that it is important for those seeking to move into senior leadership to be able to understand the history of higher education. She and other presidents believe that understanding the history of higher education helps senior leaders understand how higher education institutions operate and how they can be improved. Among the topics she identified as vital were:

- the history of higher education; understanding how higher education is organized; how it works; sometimes how it doesn’t work; and also understanding that you don’t work in isolation. in particular, when you work in a system.

President Levi Carter seconded her sentiments, as he reflected on the importance of this knowledge. He shared:

I have more of a sense of the history of higher education because of my study, more of a sense of the people who have come before me in the industry in the history of higher education and the contributions that we could all make, but I don’t think I would have that perspective without the study of higher education.

These statements reinforce the findings of Nelson (2008) who posited that presidents should understand the foundational concepts of the academy. He wrote:

Such a duty requires presidents to embrace the creed of the academy and its time-honored beliefs: freedom of thought and inquiry, freedom of academic expression, respect for diverse opinions, commitment to civility, and belief in human equality, progress and the tenets of meritocracy. Fundamentally, that means that the creed and those beliefs must be understood as the foundation of what it means to be in the university (p. A37).

Finance in Higher Education

In addition to being in agreement about the value of gaining knowledge of the history of higher education, eleven of the respondents shared that being exposed to information on budgeting and finance is extremely important. President Peter Johns of Ethanville University expressed it best when he shared:

Certainly there is I think a greater requirement for understanding fiscal management. If a person coming into a presidency truly does not understand accounting or how to read a balance sheet or understand cash flow they better figure it out pretty fast. There is extraordinary pressure to be able to understand and monitor that and you know it’s, I mean we’ve got great people here in finance, but my name is on the line, on making sure that the financial house is in order. It's not enough just to be able to say well, I know how to hire great people; you’ve got to understand it yourself.

President Johns also said it well. He shared:

It is very important that higher education executives, especially presidents, have a working knowledge of budgeting and finance in higher education. If presidents do not understand finance in higher education they may find themselves in unwanted situations.

President Elijah Alexander emphasized that finance and budgeting are among the most important areas a president needs to master. He stated:

Knowledge of finance and budgeting, I didn’t say the skills, but now just the knowledge of finance and
budgeting. Those would be skills that I would put high on the list.

Lucus Jacob, president of Landon State University, remarked that presidents who show that they have a good understanding of financial matters within the university demonstrate and signal to their administrative colleagues that they are competent leaders. He shared:

You've got to have a basic understanding of budgeting and finance so that you can have conversations with your business people to make sure that you are in control of your resources.

This emphasis on understanding finance and budgeting for presidents is supported by the results of the most recent ACE (2012) study, which found that budgeting was one of the top four responsibilities that occupy most of the presidents' time (Cook, 2012).

Knowledge Acquisition of the Culture

The second knowledge area derived from this study was knowledge acquisition to operate properly in the culture of higher education. Knowledge acquisition of the culture involves two aspects: the context and public image.

Knowledge acquisition of culture is defined in this study as higher education leaders gaining information that enables them to have a basic understanding of the historical and modern context of the field of higher education. President Lucus Jacob provided an excellent example of knowledge acquisition when he explained that presidents need to have a sharp grasp of the politics that affect higher education. He noted:

You've got to have a basic understanding of the academy and what it's about and how it functions. And you've got to have an understanding of politics, because all politics are local, and you don't get away no matter where you go, there's going to be politics.

This statement reflects the sentiments of Nelson (2008) in which he posited that it is the responsibility of the president to understand the culture of his or her campus community. He suggested that not only does a president need to understand the campus climate and culture, he or she also has the responsibility for protecting the campus from unnecessary fragmentation. He suggested that one approach to avoiding this fragmentation is for a president to foster a culture of accountability and transparency. President Ryan Wyatt's thoughts captured this notion when he stated:

If you are going to be a successful administrator, you need to understand the issues of accountability and transparency, how to help people understand the objectives and whether or not the objectives have been met and how the objectives are measured and I think one would need to have a pretty good understanding of that.

President Emelia Lily also mentioned this when she said:

Some of the things I learned in my doctoral program that are helping me to be able to see the connections and to see how things may be different, but how things may be the same….I enjoy being a learner and that's part of the way I've approached this opportunity.

Understanding Public Image

Another area in the cultural arena that presidents believed future higher education leaders must be knowledgeable about is the role that their presidencies will play in their professional identity. Presidents shared that the presidency is a unique position. The president is seen by many as the primary spokesperson and symbol of the university. Understanding public image means that you think about this and find ways to deal with it. If presidents take this expectation too far, they run the risk of believing that they are their position. President Nolan Cooper expressed it this way:

My job, this is my job, this is not who I am. And when you get presidents who forget who they are and assume that they are their job or they are the university, they are in trouble.

Ian Flynn added to the notion that those in a presidency must take themselves seriously, but not too seriously because a leader's flaws are obvious to many, and a leader can be blind to them. President Flynn used this analogy to make this point: "I think (you need to have) the ability to be able to say, "The emperor has no clothes."

Ryan Wyatt expressed the opinion that there is a marked difference between serving as a vice president and serving in a presidency in terms of the role and public image. Although he had served over fourteen years in three diverse vice presidencies, he found that being a president required him to be viewed as a president at all times in public. He expressed it this way:

I suppose that it is also a very public life and I knew that, and I have lived a public life at another time in life, but this is one where particularly in my setting where I am at a small school in a relatively small town, I am never not the president of the university and it is always the case. I talked about that with people, but I don’t think I really understood it until I had experienced it.

Researchers of the college and university presidency recognize that presidents are not the only individuals that are impacted by their public image (Siegel, 2011; Pierce, 2011). Presidents’ families also live in a “fishbowl.” Siegel (2011) describes the fishbowl effect as occurring when “members of the campus community bestow the presidency with symbolic
attributes, and as a result they keep an observant watch over the behaviors and words of the president and ascribe meaning to many of the things the president does and says” (p. 85).

**Complex Cognitive Thinking**

The third knowledge area derived from this study is complex cognitive thinking. Complex cognitive thinking is defined in this study as the ability of leaders in higher education to find the interconnection between divergent ideas and to reflect and synthesize that information while being open to emergent ideas. President Lily, along with seven other presidents, emphasized the importance of senior leaders in higher education developing the ability to reflect after completing a project. This honing of knowledge enables presidents to learn from mistakes and integrate their successes in future endeavors. Lily shared this insight:

> It is really a skill and ability at wrapping up the knowledge that you have, ok. Taking the time to reflect on what it is that you really have accomplished, somebody setting the goal, how you implemented the goal or how you achieved the goal, and being able to talk about how you did that. Why do I say that, well I think it demonstrates leadership, you have to be able to demonstrate that. It also demonstrates perseverance.

President William James shared that making cognitive connections is important because it helps presidents solve complex problems. He stated:

> One thing I learned though is the leader has to look at a problem from multiple lenses and if you don't understand the problem, you're going to apply perhaps the wrong solution to the problem and so that's what I found most helpful is to be able to develop a skill set to analyze critically and effectively what the problem is and then define, through consultation with others, the right solution for the right problem.

Nelson (2009) found that developing cognitive thinking is very important for presidents as they are interacting with highly sophisticated and intelligent constituencies. He shared, "Presidents have to manage highly politicized environments populated by tremendously bright people including faculty, but also trustees, alumni, friends and, not least, students (p. 26)."

**Essential Competencies**

In addition to knowledge areas, the presidents identified three essential competencies needed to succeed in their positions. In this study, competencies are defined as special non-generic skills that apply to a particular sector, job, or field. Areas the presidents identified as needed for success in the university presidency are displayed in Table 3. The primary core competency areas that presidents identified included: (Personal Attributes), Management (Assessment and Accountability, Enrollment Management, Fundraising, and Strategic Planning), and Communications (Interpersonal Development, Writing to Diverse Audiences and Speaking to Diverse Audiences).

**Table 3**

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**Personal Attributes**

President Ryan Wyatt, along with ten other presidents, expressed their belief that it is vitally important that aspiring presidents have a strong sense of who they are. In addition, Wyatt shared that one must understand his or her own "gifts and graces" before going into a presidency. There are several attributes that presidents in this study identified as important. They included (1) developing their own sense of vision, (2) humility, (3) empathy, (4) the ability to understand and connect with people, (5) team building, (6) the ability to express concepts in everyday language, and (7) work hard. Wyatt expressed the importance of these attributes below.
I think a president has to have the capacity to be a (1) visionary leader and to develop a vision that grows organically out of the institution that is a shared vision in which all of the constituents feel that they have a stake. It needs to be seen as the university’s vision, not as the president’s vision, but the president has to be the person who leads the charge in the development of the vision and then in the implementation of the vision.

Every president brings a unique set of attributes to a presidency. It is therefore important for aspiring presidents to strengthen their most positive attributes, including the attributes just mentioned. In addition, presidents like Gavin Benjamin believe that personal attributes such as teamwork are imperative in the 21st century university presidency. He said:

No one person can be successful by himself. A university president doesn’t do it by himself. You have to build the team. So, working with others to put it in the colloquial frame is extremely important. Be able to realize that it’s going to take hard work, it’s not just a 9 to 5 job and that’s important.

The personal attributes that presidents demonstrate helps them to navigate what Siegel (2011) describes as “multiple, and often competing, interpretations of any number of cultural phenomena that exist in the institutional environment. Negotiating the cultural environment and bringing together constituent groups that have disparate views, beliefs, and behavioral norms are critical” (p. 79).

Management

These findings included a diverse cadre of management areas that presidents viewed as vital. Presidents identified assessment and accountability of student learning, enrollment management, fundraising, and strategic planning as essential competencies that aspiring senior leaders should master.

Assessment and Accountability of Student Learning.

Close to half of the presidents believe that aspiring presidents need to be prepared in the area of student assessment. Dr. Ryan Wyatt expressed it this way:

If you are going to be a successful administrator, you need to understand the issues of accountability and transparency, how to help people understand the objectives and whether or not the objectives have been met and how the objectives are measured and I think one would need to have pretty good understanding of that.

Many of the presidents shared that understanding of assessment and accountability need not be just relegated to student learning. They shared that the 21st century university president will be responsible for making sure that assessment and accountability are a part of the culture of every unit within an institution. President Joshua Dillan explained it well when he said:

I think it is critical to assess everything that you are doing…. I think it will be a part of a president’s job more than it used to be. And (it is important that) we (presidents) compare this to assessing the effectiveness of administrative and operational and business things. Faculty are very much not used to doing this on their side and struggling to do it and having this requirement mandated all of a sudden does not necessarily make it very effective.

With the rise of tuition by institutions on an almost yearly basis, the expectations of regional accrediting agencies, parents, and students have increased, particularly in the area of student learning outcomes (Pierce, 2011). Thus, the importance of the president having competency in this area, as expressed by the respondents in this study, is understandable.

Enrollment Management

More than half of the presidents responded that aspiring presidents need to have a strong understanding of issues related to enrollment management. Many, such as President Joshua Dillan, mentioned that senior leaders who are learning about enrollment management must first understand the relationship between “mission and market.”

The biggest piece is understanding. I think how connected missions in market are and how you have to have a mission that is both rooted in tradition, but also understand its role in a tentative market. So enrollment management systems science has developed out of that, you know once you are sort of clear about who you are and how your brand is and what you are selling as a whole.

It appears that presidents need to have a strong understanding of how to tie the mission of their universities to their particular markets (i.e. students). If presidents don’t have a strong understanding of the role that enrollment plays in managing the university, they may place themselves in a bad position. President Lucus Jacob explained:

At so many places, your prosperity as an institution is depending on your student population, particularly in your private institutions where you don’t have state funding. I think it’s a very
important thing that a president has to put his arms around pretty quickly.

President Levi Carter said most it succinctly when he shared: “I would say you have to have knowledge of enrollment.” Bryan J. Cook (2012), director of ACE’s Center for Policy Analysis, has suggested that presidents must be able to manage ballooning enrollments. This is a phenomenon that has been precipitated because of the decision of state and federal governments to draw back on financial support, which has had a harmful effect on public higher education institutions in particular (Wooton, 2009; Mortenson, 2012).

Fundraising

More than half of the presidents shared that an aspiring president needs to be competent in the area of fundraising. This corresponds with the 2012 ACE study, which listed fundraising as one of the most important competency areas. Nelson (2009) stated, “College presidents must raise money and conduct major capital campaigns (p. 26).” Likewise, Ekman (2010) found that “most presidents will say—having the chance to engage influential outsiders in the college and to persuade those outsiders to become equally committed to the cause is usually a rewarding experience (p. 63).” President Gavin Benjamin of Connor State discussed this issue by saying:

I think anyone that along the line that knows that they're going to be in a vice presidential or top executive position in a college or university, they are also going to have to raise money, even the deans and others.

Presidents such as Jessica Elliott expressed the importance of presidents retaining a strong fundraising staff to assist with cultivating fundraising opportunities:

It is a specialty (fundraising). I think if you have a very good staff in the fundraising area that really can help you. If you have the structure set up, you're brought in at a unique time, when you have to, you know, do “the ask.”

The data suggested that it is important that the president be the person to ask for the larger sums of money from major donors. Several presidents noted that the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education's (CASE) fundraising and philanthropy workshops do a great job of exposing presidents to various techniques used to attract financial donations from a diverse set of donors.

Strategic Planning

Six of the presidents expressed the belief that aspiring university presidents needed to be prepared in the area of strategic planning. In this study, strategic planning is defined as the process in which a higher education institution engages to define its course of action to prepare for the future of the institution. William James summed up the general response of the respondents by sharing that presidents must understand strategic planning because they will be expected to lead in strategizing the future of their institution when he said,” the president needs to be the lead visionary and strategist.” Ekman (2010) believes that being the chief strategist of the university is one of the best perks of the job. He shared, “presidents do have the opportunity to craft, then to act on the basis of an idealized vision for the institution—to weave personal values into one’s work to an unusual degree.” (p.63)

President Ryan Wyatt shared that a president needs to know how to put the strategic plan into action. This is important because presidents are expected to produce results. As Wyatt noted: “You really ought to have an understanding of how to approach strategic planning in a college or university setting and how to convert a strategic plan into action.”

Communications

Communications was one of the most talked about competency areas discussed by presidents in this study. Communication as a competency in this study is defined as the effective execution of written or oral communication and the ability to effectively engage in interpersonal development. President Elijah Alexander remarked, “communication … skills that I would put high on the list of competencies a president must master.” President Cooper also emphasized that communicating is central to the work that university presidents do. He stated: “I think writing and communicating are skills…all those come back to, a central thing, communication. They all come back to the ability to communicate effectively.”

Writing to Diverse Audiences

One of the areas of general consensus within the communication competency between all participants was the role that writing plays in the career of a president. Presidents shared that aspiring presidents need to be prepared to write to multiple audiences, such as to an academic audience and to the general public. Several presidents, such as Lucus Jacob, shared that presidents should have a grasp of the rudiments of good writing. President Jacob expressed it this way:

In writing, you've got to have the ability to be clear, to be concise, to make your point, and to do so in a way that engages the person that's receiving the communication.
President Nolan Cooper noted that strong writing skills were important because writing is one of the primary vehicles by which president’s competence is judged. This is in line with Siegel’s (2011) finding that presidents are often expected to communicate through written strategic plans and other means to foster cordial and open communication between their office and campus constituencies.

**Speaking to Diverse Audiences.**

In addition to learning how to write to diverse audiences, six presidents talked about the need for aspiring presidents to hone their speaking ability. Nelson (2009) suggests that “they must be leaders that…speak eloquently (p. 26).” Dr. Lucus Jacob, president of Landon State University, talked of the need to be able to speak in a variety of settings and being capable of giving an impromptu speech. He shared:

> If you are going to be an upper level executive administrator, then public speaking is going to be a part of what you do on a regular basis. Whether it’s to the rotary club or the Kiwanis, I’ve done sermons, you know, I’ve spoken at faculty meetings, you end up doing impromptu things from time to time and school presentations. I mean it just becomes, it has to become a second nature to what you do.

President Jessica Elliott emphasized that this competency is not learned overnight. She improved her speaking skills over time.

> I think I had developed that to a certain degree because I had leadership responsibilities, but, uh, I think because of the responsibilities on this level and I improved in that area because sometimes you have to go from one group to the next. You have to go through faculty to administrators to a social group and you have to adjust your message and I think that’s a technique that I have learned and I have improved in over the years.

President Evelyn Aurora explained that aspiring presidents must not only be prepared to give positive, inspiring speeches, they need to be prepared to give tough ones as well. She stated,

> You are going to give a lot of speeches, persuasive speeches and informational speeches, speeches where you are telling people you are getting ready to cut their budgets, and there are so many different ways.

**Interpersonal Development**

The final communication competency area derived from this study is interpersonal development. Interpersonal development is defined in this study as the ability to relate and work with diverse individuals. Eleven presidents expressed the belief that interpersonal development is an important part of being successful as a leader within the academy. Some presidents, such as President Evelyn Aurora, believed that participation within professional meetings could assist with the development of this competency. President Aurora expressed her experience this way:

> I remember going to these big conferences and you think you would develop these skills at parties, but it is almost like a party skill. You come in the room and everybody is in a little circle talking and you have to figure out how to get in the circle so you can talk with the people, and also how to move from circle to circle and that is an absolute essential skill if you go into higher education administration, because when you go to chamber meetings, or when you are going to these big business meetings, you have to figure out how to get in the circle, because people tend to talk in circles.

Elijah Alexander added to this conversation by sharing how in practice, presidents need to be able to interact with diverse constituencies, because their success and legacy is dependent on it.

> I do think in interacting, one of the things that a president has to do is to be able to interact, you’ve got to be a person who’s almost on the verge of ministering, you’ve got to be persuasive, you’ve got to convince people, you’ve got to, you know, engage and be able to convince them and this is the direction that we need to go.

The president is seen as the “living logo” of the university (Siegel, 2011). Therefore, it is important that a president is able to represent the institution favorably among various constituencies. Siegel (2011) expresses the importance of presidential interactions in this statement: “Whether attending faculty or committee meetings, visiting campus functions or athletic events, speaking to student groups, initiating town hall discussions, or participating in ceremonies such as graduation or convocation, the presidents felt their daily interactions in the campus environment were replete with symbolic gestures” (p.85).

**5. Discussion and Implications**

The findings suggest that it is important to those aspiring to a university presidency to have foundational knowledge in higher education and to have a mastery of information related to the history and finance in higher education. This is an important finding. Although most
higher education doctoral programs offer courses on topics related to these content areas, the results of this study validate their importance, especially as it relates to preparation for presidential leadership.

Results of this study also indicate that the presidents view themselves as both leaders and managers. Management skills (assessment/accountability, enrollment management, fundraising, strategic planning) were quite clearly identified. Examining the findings as a whole, the leadership skills are also present. They appear inherent in the language used to describe them. Among these skills and competencies are: Knowledge Acquisition of Culture, Complex Cognitive Knowledge, and Communications. McLaughlin (2004) shares,

In a university presidency, leadership is characterized by a focus on the values, purposes, and meaning of the institution, both as an affirmation of its raison d’être and as a mandate for change. Presidents are expected to connect individuals to the mission of the enterprise, to raise sights, and to encourage hopefulness in the future.

Although leadership and management in the context of a university are closely related they are not interchangeable. McLaughlin (2004) shares,

In their leadership role, college and university presidents are called on to attend to the ideas, ideals, and individuals of their institutions. As managers, presidents serve as their institution’s chief executive officer…working to align institutional resources—money, technology, and personnel—to solve problems or forge new institutional directions.

As verified in the literature above, both leadership and management are important in the role of presidents.

The results also suggest that aspiring presidents should be able to integrate information, especially complex concepts. In addition, prospective presidents should be able to acquire knowledge and understand that serving as a university president places them as a public figure in the eyes of the academic and larger community.

Results of the study also suggest that presidents should develop strong interpersonal competencies. Thus, presidents should be able to speak to diverse constituencies such as local and national media as well as students. The study also alludes to the notion that presidents should enhance their personal attributes such as humility and empathy. It also appears that they must develop competencies in oral and written communication formats to ensure that they are prepared to communicate effectively with diverse audiences.

6. Application of Findings

While the findings of this study may not be generalizable to all presidents or organizational settings, they do provide a perspective that might be helpful to a variety of constituencies and groups. In addition to providing meaningful information for standing presidents, the insights gleaned might be of value to those in academic senior leadership roles who aspire to the presidency, such as provost, other vice presidents, and special assistants. They may be able to use the results of this study to identify the areas that they need to hone to strengthen a future bid for a university presidential position. The identified knowledge and competencies might also be used by boards of trustees as a list of areas that they can use to rank the fitness of a presidential candidate for their institution.

The results of this study may also provide executive higher education programs and standard higher education doctoral programs with a list of knowledge and competency areas to incorporate into their curriculum. They may also want to consider some personal skills such as communication and reflective skills as part of the admission process.

One constituency this study may provide particular insights for are non-degree granting higher education training agencies. These agencies include organizations such as the American Council of Education, Harvard Institute for Educational Management, and Kellogg Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) Leadership Fellows Program. The suggestions by these presidents can provide insight into knowledge and competency mastery areas that programs can cover during their leadership development sessions.

Although this study included only university presidents, it would be relevant in the future to explore the perspectives of presidents of other types of institutions such as community colleges and liberal arts institutions. It might also be meaningful to conduct research with university presidents who earned their doctorate in a discipline other than education. Likewise, it might be of value to initiate similar studies with a group of presidents from a single type of university such as HBCU, Hispanic, for profit, or religious. Other studies might address whether differences exist based on the gender or ethnicity of the president. A quantitative study, developed using the findings of this study, would allow data collection from a larger group of presidents.

Such studies could confirm or refute whether the perceptions of the knowledge and competencies identified by these presidents are viewed in the same manner across a wide variety of institutions and groups. This would provide the public with data that could be compared with the results of this study and further refine our understanding of this important area.

Another area for future research includes surveying the perspectives of other graduates of higher education administration doctoral programs such as those preparing chief academic officers, diversity officers, and higher education faculty. Such studies would enable these populations an opportunity to provide their perspectives and could provide higher education faculty and curriculum developers with data that could assist them in enhancing the quality of higher education administration doctoral programs.

Surprisingly, in this study there was little to no mention by any of the presidents of working with or communicating with ethnically diverse constituencies as being of importance. Likewise, there was no mention of understanding and using technology as an essential knowledge or competency area in the presidency. With the increased growth of an ethnically diverse student and alumni base at predominantly White and minority serving institutions (Gasman, 2011) and the growing use of technology in this global age, it may be advantageous for higher education researchers to engage in research to investigate why these two areas, so prominent in our world today, were not addressed by these presidents.
7. Conclusion

The expectations for university presidents by internal and external constituencies are increasing across the United States. These constituencies expect their presidents to ensure that issues such as student learning and fundraising are managed. Many presidents might find these issues daunting and overwhelming if they were not trained and prepared to deal with them. It is vital that potential or aspiring university presidents in higher education develop the knowledge and competencies that are needed for their success prior to assuming a university presidency. Clearly, more research is needed to find out whether the knowledge and competencies identified in this study will adequately prepare presidents from other institutional types, but this study provides a useful starting point and provides direction for future research on this important topic.

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**Related Items:**

- Table 1: Study Participants
- Table 2: Knowledge Areas
- Table 3: Competency Areas
- Article References
Principals’ Emotional Intelligence and Its Impact on Adequate Yearly Progress

by Evelyn Henry and Warren Hope

Abstract

Colleges and universities prepare candidates with theory and leadership scenarios, enabling them to become leaders of successful schools. However, some principals do not lead their schools to success. Cognizant of this reality, it would be beneficial to know why principals with equivalent leadership training often experience different outcomes of school success based upon student academic achievement. The literature claims that emotional intelligence influences leadership in an organization. Indeed, some scholars assert that leaders who possess high levels of emotional intelligence have a greater effect on their organizations than their counterparts who have lower levels of emotional intelligence.

This research sought to ascertain the degree of correlation between Georgia’s elementary and middle school principals’ emotional intelligence and school status of “meets” or “does not meet” Adequate Yearly Progress. A successful school and principal are identified through the criterion of meets Adequate Yearly Progress. It was postulated that principals with high levels of emotional intelligence would be leaders of schools that meet Adequate Yearly Progress, and those with low levels would be associated with schools that did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress. A binary logistic regression model was used to analyze data obtained from 125 elementary and middle school principals. Five research questions were formulated to guide the inquiry. A key question was: Is there a correlation between a principals’ emotional intelligence and a school’s status of meets or does not meet Adequate Yearly Progress?

1. Introduction

Today, public education in America pivots around accountability, and there is an expectation that the principal will fashion a learning environment that manifests student academic achievement. According to Bracey (2003), to improve student achievement in public education, it is important to explain why principals with equivalent educational training obtain different outcomes of school success. It is well known that the principal is the most important administrator in a school and is responsible for achieving its mission. Colleges and universities provide them with theories and practical knowledge to organize and lead successful schools; however, some principals fail to do so (Harris, Day, Hadfield, Hopkins, Hargraves & Chapman, 2005).

A student’s academic accomplishment in a school, to a large extent, depends on the principal’s leadership style and character (Cunningham & Cordiero, 2006). According to Goleman (2004), there are many leadership styles, and the most effective leaders operate their schools according to one or more of them. Many leaders are able to vacillate between styles, depending on the situation and the school’s environment and culture.

With a chosen leadership style, principals must be able to create working relationships with many people and also perform the roles of mediator, mentor, negotiator, and networker (Cherniss, 1998). Hackman and Johnson (2004) stated that a school leader’s effectiveness depends on his or her personality, the behavior of the followers, the nature of the task, and communication style. Today, successful leadership is defined by inspiring and motivating others, promoting a positive work environment, perceiving and understanding emotions, and fostering an organizational climate in which people
turn challenging opportunities into success (Bolston, 2001). Principals operate in an environment that involves working and collaborating with others, as a result, effective interpersonal and communication skills are essential. How they handle their emotions and react to those of others in various situations affects their leadership.

Principals cope with unprecedented demands of serving as instructional leader, increasing students’ test scores, meeting state standards, and addressing the academic needs of diverse student populations. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a catalyst for increased accountability for student academic performance. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a component of NCLB, has the attention of principals and virtually every stakeholder in the education enterprise. AYP is an annual mandated performance goal set by each state that determines whether a school is awarded the status of “meets” or “does not meet” AYP. AYP performance goals are used to establish whether or not schools are educating students effectively by requiring an accountability system to determine if they are making progress towards the goal of one hundred percent proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014 (Education Week, 2004).

In the state of Georgia, AYP is a measurement tool that monitors the academic progress of each student in all school districts. AYP is used to make accountability decisions and assign schools a rating of “meets” or “does not meet.” Schools that meet AYP are designated as “successful,” while those that do not meet the standard are considered “failures.” AYP in Georgia is determined through three student performance factors:

1. Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), which is given annually to each student in the state. Students must show a yearly percentage rate increase in mathematics and reading. Subgroups of students (i.e., low-income, Black, Hispanic, English language learners, and special needs) must also show an increase in language, mathematics, and reading.
2. The average daily student attendance rate must be ninety-two percent; no student should miss more than fifteen days in one academic year.
3. Qualifying student subgroups (i.e., low-income, Black, Hispanic, English language learners, regular education, and special needs) must meet the 95 percent test participation goal.

A school that fails to meet any of the three performance factors is stamped “does not meet” AYP. A school that does not meet AYP for seven consecutive years is subject to sanction, with parents given the opportunity to select another school at the expense of the district, or the school is subject to restructuring with options of state takeover or conversion to a charter school managed by a private company.

Working in combination with issues of student academic accountability under NCLB, principals are also responsible for creating and supporting a shared vision for their schools’ growth, which includes input from teachers, staff, parents, and community (Bardach, 2008). To ensure that each student receives a quality education, parents have the option under NCLB to decide where their children will attend school in a district. To sustain employment, principals must compete with private and other public schools to obtain a sufficient student population to remain open. Accordingly, Bagin, Gallagher and Moore (2008) indicated that principals must be proficient in public relations and possess the ability to communicate effectively and convey a positive perception of the educational opportunities that are being offered at their institution.

Leaders with similar education, training, and work experience will often experience very different degrees of organizational success. In education, this variation in success among leaders may be attributed to an abundance of resources for students, smaller class sizes, school climate and culture, and parent and community involvement (Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore, 2008; Owens & Valesky, 2007; Hackman & Johnson, 2004). Lewandowski (2005) asserted that the key to successful schools are the students themselves, who must be allowed to incorporate their input into the curriculum. Edmonds (1986) offered several indicators of an effective school, including strong leaders; an orderly, humane climate; frequent monitoring of students’ progress; and high expectations for all students.

Conflicts exist in the literature regarding the attributes of an effective school. However, research by Caruso and Salovey (2004), and Goleman (2006) revealed that principals who possess emotional intelligence (EI) are an asset to schools. Dimensions of EI, according to Caruso and Salovey (2004) and Goleman (2006), are self-awareness, self-management, relationship-management, and social-awareness. Principals who employ these dimensions of EI at a high level are able to develop a close connection with school staff, parents, and community leaders (Lunenburg & Omstein, 2008).

### 2. Principals and Emotional Intelligence

A principal spends a considerable amount of time interacting with people and their issues, often at the expense of other tasks. He or she must have the emotional ability to build and maintain positive and trusting relationships (Patti & Tobin, 2006). A principal who precisely recognizes a teacher or parent’s slight frustration during a meeting and understands the significance of that emotion will be better able to predict the teacher’s or parent’s subsequent actions and respond appropriately (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002).

Principals who understand the emotional needs of school personnel students usually produce a positive environment where teachers are effective and students tend to flourish academically (Denham, 1998; Brackett, Rivers, Lerner, Salovey, & Shiffman, 2006; Mills, 2003). When a principal has the ability to recognize, comprehend, identify, articulate, and adjust emotions, he or she creates healthy open communication and a learning environment that generates a sense of student safety and value (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Gray (2009) asserted that emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of every decision a principal makes; solving problems and making judgments are a part of a leader’s system of values and beliefs. A principal’s emotional intelligence skills are vital to a collaborative effort to increase student achievement and to ensure the school’s well-being as a learning community (Gray, 2009). Harris, Hopkins, Hadfield, Hargraves, and Chapman (2005) surmised that as challenges facing principals in schools become increasingly multifaceted over the next decade, it is possible that the best principals will be judged on how they manage their emotions and respond to others rather than how they manage systems or structures.

Fullan (2002) implied that principals who are emotionally intelligent are aware of their own emotional composition and are sensitive and inspiring to others. Fullan also asserted that EI principals are able to handle daily school related problems and think conceptually as they
transform the school organization through teachers and community organizations. Principals with the capacity to successfully express their fundamental feelings and emotions are crucial to effective school leadership.

Howard Gardner, Daniel Goleman, Peter Salovey, John Mayer, and others have provided a significant amount of data indicating that individuals who exhibit an extensive amount of understanding of emotions experience more organizational success (Bardach, 2008). Indeed, during the past two decades, no psychological concept has had a greater influence on leadership development than EI (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). EI is a promising area of research given its potential to influence leadership and organizational goals. As the search for interventions in education to manifest increased student academic achievement continues, EI presents itself as a framework with potential to transform leadership to obtain improved student achievement outcomes. However, EI research in the field of educational leadership is still in the early stages of development, and results related to its impact on school leadership and student academic achievement is limited. Given EI’s accolades in the literature, there is a need to know more about whether there is a viable connection between it and school leadership.

3. Purpose of the Study

This research had a twofold purpose: (a) determine whether there is a correlation between the EI of elementary and middle school principals in Georgia and school success as codified in the status of meets or does not meet AYP, and (b) ascertain if there is a relationship between principals’ EI score and age, gender, and ethnicity relative to school success specified in meets or does not meet AYP.

4. Research Questions

Five research questions were generated the guide the inquiry. They are:

1. Is there a correlation between a principal’s emotional intelligence and a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP?
2. Is there a correlation between a principal’s emotional intelligence competencies perceiving and managing emotions and school status of meets or does not meet AYP?
3. Is there a correlation between a principal’s age and a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP?
4. Is there a correlation between emotional intelligence competencies, understanding, and managing emotions and a principal’s ethnicity?
5. Is there a correlation between emotional intelligence competencies perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions and a principal’s gender?

5. Research Methodologies

A correlation prediction procedure was used to analyze data concerning the degree of association between a principal’s EI score and school status of meets or does not meet AYP. A correlation prediction procedure identifies simple associations between variables and specifies the extent to which the variables are related. This information is used to predict the outcome of the predictor variable and criterion variables. This research sought to ascertain whether a relationship exists between the criterion variable, school status, meets or does not meet AYP, and the predictor variable, a principal’s EI score.

Once a relationship was detected for the bivariate, a measure of association for the data was conducted using a Point-Biserial Correlation Coefficient model to provide a numerical measure of the strength and the direction of the criterion and predictor variables. The criterion variable, school status, is dichotomous; therefore, a logistic regression model was utilized to determine the degree of association between principals’ emotional intelligence scores and the school status, meets or does not meet AYP. The logistic regression data helped predict whether a principal’s emotional intelligence scores can determine a school’s AYP status. The alpha for this research was set at .05.

6. Sample and Sampling Procedures

Principals were selected from the 1,659 elementary and middle schools in the state of Georgia. For the 2008-2009, school year, 1,440 schools met AYP. Of this number, 1,047 were elementary and 393 middle. Two hundred nineteen schools did not meet AYP. Of this group, 104 were elementary and 115 middle. The status of meets or does not meet for each school was recorded. The principal’s name, ethnicity and gender were obtained from the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) website. This information was used to select every other Black and White female and male principals of schools that met and did not meet AYP. A convenience sample of 200 elementary and middle school principals was selected from the GDOE website.

A proportionate quota sampling procedure was used to ensure that an equal representation of females, males, Caucasians, and African Americans participated in the research. Proportionate quota sampling is used when the population and distribution across groups is known, and when normal sampling may not provide individuals in minority groups (Trochim, 2006). The fixed quota for the participants was based on the characteristics of ethnicity and gender. The non-random sample of 200 principals solicited to participate consisted of 100 principals (50 middle and 50 elementary) in schools that meet AYP and 100 principals (50 middle and 50 elementary) in schools that did not meet AYP. Among the sample of 100 in the category meets AYP, 50 principals were females, 25 African American and 25 Caucasian; 50 were males, 25 African American and 25 Caucasian. In the category did not meet AYP, the sample of 100 consisted of 50 females, 25 African American and 25 Caucasian; 50 males, 25 African American and 25 Caucasian.

The AYP school status of meets or does not meet followed the principal if he or she was transferred to another school. An individual who served as an elementary or middle school principal during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 terms and transferred to a different position at another elementary or middle school in Georgia was allowed to participate in the research.
Principals of 100 elementary and middle schools that did not meet AYP and those of 100 elementary and middle schools that met AYP were asked to complete the Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) online. An e-mail was sent to the 200 principals asking for their participation—125 responded. Multi-Health Services, owners of the MSCEIT copyright, supplied a list of the identification codes for each principal who completed the MSCEIT. These codes were also used to contact principals who did not respond to the survey in the initial two-week window.

A decision was made to compile the returned data into two groups for analysis. Therefore, a web address of www.mhsassessments.com and a code was assigned to principals of the 100 schools that meet AYP and to the 100 in schools that did not meet AYP. After five weeks, 51% (n=64) of principals in the meets AYP group and 49% (n=61) in the does not meet group returned a completed MSCEIT yielding a 63% response rate. MHS e-mailed a data sheet containing the four EI content area scores and the total EI scores of each principal, which was entered into SPSS 19.

An AYP report for each elementary and middle school in Georgia is public information and accessible on the GDOE website. These data identify a school as meets or does not meet AYP. Data were downloaded and entered into SPSS 19 to be associated with principals’ EI scores, which would reveal the existence of a correlation.

7. Research Instrument

The MSCEIT was designed by David R. Caruso, John Mayer, and Peter Salovey in 1995. Deemed an ability test of emotional intelligence, it is suitable for use with individuals 17 and older. The test consists of 141 items that yield a total emotional intelligence score and four branch scores, perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The MSCEIT was scored according to a general consensus criterion, based on the responses of a large number of individuals randomly selected from countries around the world; the majority was residents of the United States. For example, if 90% of these individuals specified that a particular picture of a child’s face with a deep frown showed fear and anger, then participants who gave that specific response on a future test would be considered as providing the correct answer (Mayer et al., 2002). The aggregated item scores are converted to average standard scores with a population mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15, as is customary in psychometric tests of intelligence related constructs. The reliability of the MSCEIT was determined on the basis of 2,888 participants. The total scores of the participants in the experiential area, strategic area, and branch scores in perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions were computed using split-half analyses as the items were heterogeneous. Reliabilities for the eight individual task scores were computed as internal-consistency (alpha) reliabilities (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). Using consensus scoring, based upon the agreement of a large number of people, the MSCEIT has a full-scale reliability of .93, with area reliabilities of .90, experiential and .88, strategic. The reliabilities of the MSCEIT four branch scores range from .79 to .91. This indicates that this test is a highly reliable at the four Branch, Area, and Total score levels (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003). Brackett and Mayer (2003) found a test-retest reliability for the full-scale MSCEIT of r = .86, over a 3 week period with an N of 60. Expert scoring was fairly comparable, with a full-scale test reliability of .91 and branch scores ranging from .76 to .90.

Rivers, Brackett, and Salovey (2008) conducted a study using 5000 participants from a general population in an effort to determine the content validity of the MSCEIT. Participants were educationally, ethnically, and gender diverse. Many were from other countries, and ages ranged from 18 to 69. Rivers et al. concluded that the general EI evaluation of the MSCEIT was valid as a “total score.” The MSCEIT also shows strong evidence of response-process evidence validity (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). The response-process evidence of validity is a form of validity that determines whether the questions raised by the MSCEIT are ones that a test taker can answer and then matches the individual’s response to a criterion of correctness (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). The MSCEIT assesses how well people solve problems using emotions, thus, the conclusion is that the MSCEIT measures the key issues of EI and is valid.

8. Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

A binary logistic regression model determined the association between the dichotomous criterion variable, school status, and the continuous predictor variable, a principal’s EI. A Point Biserial correlation was also used to determine the relationship between a principal’s total emotional intelligence score and a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize principals’ responses on the MSCEIT and to provide a demographic analysis of a principal’s age, gender, and ethnicity. Summary data of the demographic variables, age, gender, and ethnicity were used to respond to research questions 3, 4, and 5. Table 1 shows principals’ age, gender, and ethnicity in relation to the criterion variables, meets or does not meet AYP.

The age data for principals associated with meets AYP reveal that the largest subgroup is comprised of ages 40 and 49 (37.5%). The data also indicate that the largest age subgroups for principals associated with does not meet AYP was between 40 and 49 (24.6%). The range of age for both groups was between 23-69 years.

Demographic data for gender associated with meets AYP shows that 64.1% (n=64) of principals were females and 35.9% (n=23) were males. The statistics for gender associated with does not meet AYP indicate that 57.4% (n=35) of the principals were females and 42.6% (n=26) were males. Ethnicity data reveals that the largest principal subgroup, 56.2% (n=36), associated with meets AYP were Black. Blacks, 50.8% (n=31) were also the largest subgroup associated with does not meet AYP status.

The means and standard deviations for the EI branch scores (a) understanding emotions, (b) perceiving emotions, (c) managing
emotions, and (d) facilitating thought are shown in Table 2. This information was used to respond to research questions 3, 4, and 5. Table 2 shows that of the four EI branch scores associated with meets AYP, the perceiving branch had the highest mean score, 88, and a standard deviation of 21.2. The results also indicate that the perceiving branch score associated with does not meet AYP had the highest mean score, 87.5, and a standard deviation of 19.9.

Table 3 shows individual branch scores perceive, facilitate, understand, and manage cross tabulations for principals whose school met AYP. Table 4 reveals individual branch score, perceive, facilitate, understand, and manage cross tabulations for principals whose school does not meet AYP. When comparing specific branch score interval percentages, Table 3 shows that there is not a significant difference between principals' scores for AYP status meets and does not meet.

Inferential statistics allow for an interpretation to be made from the sample of principals selected from the population of elementary and middle schools in Georgia. Binary logistic regression and Point Biserial correlation coefficient determined if the independent continuous variable emotional intelligence (total EI or combinations of EI branch scores), would be influential in computing the outcome of the dichotomous variable, schools that meet or do not meet AYP.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Meets AYP</th>
<th>Does Not Meet AYP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125(100.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Overall percentages are denoted by parentheses.

### 9. Results of Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 19 was used to process data from the MSCEIT. A binary logistic regression model and a Point Biserial Correlation procedure were used to acquire results enabling a response to the research questions.
Research Question 1

Is there a correlation between a principal’s Emotional Intelligence and school status of meets or does not meet AYP? A Point Biserial correlation was used to ascertain the relationship between a principal’s total EI score and a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP. The results show a weak negative relationship that was not statistically significant at the .05 level, r_{pb} = -.083, p=.357. The relationship between a principal’s total emotional intelligence score and a school’s status of meet or does not meet AYP is not statistically significant.

Research Question 2

Is there a correlation between principals’ EI competencies perceiving and managing emotions and school status of meets or does not meet AYP? A binary logistic regression model was used to test if a principal’s perceiving and managing emotions branch score predicted a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP. Results of the regression were not statistically significant, χ² (2) =.019, p=.991. Beta coefficients, along with tests of significance, are presented in Table 5.

Research Question 3

Is there a correlation between a principal’s age and a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP? A binary logistic regression model was used to test if a principal’s age predicted a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP. Results of the regression were not statistically significant, χ² (1) =2.168, p = .141. The beta coefficient along with tests of significance is presented in Table 6.

Research Question 4

Is there a correlation between emotional intelligence competencies understanding and managing emotions and a principal’s ethnicity? A binary logistic regression model was used to test if understanding and managing emotions branch scores predicted a principal’s ethnicity. Results of the regression were not statistically significant, χ² (2) =5.287, p = .071. The Beta coefficients along with tests of significance are presented in Table 7.
Research Question 5

Is there a correlation between emotional intelligence competencies perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions and managing emotions and a principal’s gender? A binary logistic regression model was used to test if perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions branch scores predicted a principal’s gender. Regression results were not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (4) = 2.437, p = .656$. Beta coefficients, along with tests of significance, are shown in Table 8.

10. Discussion

Responses to research questions one and two derived from a correlation procedure, which disclosed the influence of principals’ EI in schools that were assigned a status of meets or does not meet AYP. The analysis revealed that principals’ overall EI had a weak negative effect that was not statistically significant in relation to a school’s AYP status. The literature conveys that EI has a significant effect on leadership performance and that effective leaders consistently use their EI to advance their organizations (Patti, Holzer, Stern & Brackett, 2012; Bradberry & Graves, 2009; Goleman, 1995). The results of this research, however, indicate that a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP is not related to a principal’s EI.

Goleman (1995) suggested that leaders in organizations with the ability to identify negative emotions and manage those feelings will have a more profound effect on employee productivity. Research by Andrews and Sober (1997) indicated that school leadership can have a positive effect on school achievement. Results of this study are not consistent with that conclusion. Analysis of response data relative to research question two indicates that there is no association between a principal’s EI branch scores of perceiving and managing emotions and a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP. A conclusion that can be drawn from this result is that there is a need for more research in the area of EI and school leadership.

For research question three, a binary logistic regression procedure was applied to determine the association between a school’s status of meets or does not meet AYP and a principal’s age. Analysis shows that principals’ age had no significant effect on emotional intelligence and a school’s designation of meets or does not meet AYP. This result is consistent with research conducted by Shipley, Jackson, and Segrest (2008), who found that the relationship between emotional intelligence and age in leadership is slight, and, at the most, to no significance.

Shipley, Jackson, and Segrest (2008) used a sample of 500 and concluded that the level of emotional intelligence among school leaders peaked at age 54 and then proceeded to decline. One explanation could be that younger principals are more attentive to the importance of their roles as leaders and have a higher stake in career longevity, thus creating a greater awareness of personal skills related to emotional intelligence necessary for interacting successfully with people in the school and community. Results of this study divulge that age has no effect on principals’ emotional intelligence score and thus no role in schools meeting or not meeting AYP. This result is not consistent with that of other studies, which suggests that as individuals age, EI increases.

A binary logistic regression procedure was used enabling a response to research question four. The results indicate that EI branch scores of understanding and managing emotions did not predict principals’ ethnicity in Georgia schools that meet or did not meet AYP.
This result is consistent with Bar-On's (1997) research with 3,831 participants, where it was found that there is no significant difference in EI scores among various ethnic groups in North America.

The binary logistic regression data analysis used to answer research question five revealed that gender had no influence on a school's status of meets or does not meet AYP. This result is consistent with Bar-On (2000) and Orloff (2009); both suggested that when observing the overall ratings of EI of females and males, there are far more similarities than differences. Orloff (2009) also indicated that women possess the ability to restrain negative feelings such as anger and self-doubt while men maintain adaptability, tolerance, and impulse control. Prior research by Mayer, Roberts, and Barsade (2008), Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, and Mayer (1999), and Sternberg and Kauffman (1998) on gender differences in EI have shown that in terms of total EI, females and males do not seem to differ in their leadership effectiveness.

11. Conclusion

Prior EI research has associated leadership with student achievement. Given this conclusion, individuals preparing to become principals could benefit from in-service trainings and staff development in EI. It follows that principals high in EI can lead schools where increased student academic achievement is a norm. A premise of this research was that principals with high EI scores would be leaders of schools that meet AYP, and those with low scores would be associated with schools that did not meet AYP. Results of this research indicate that principals in schools meeting and not meeting AYP had similar scores on the MSCEIT. Thus, there was no correlation between a principal's EI and school status of meets or does not meet AYP. This result is not consistent with the premise that principals with high EI scores would be leaders in schools that met AYP and those with low EI scores would be leaders in schools that did not meet AYP. As well, results of this research do not confirm high leader EI scores as a predictor of school success as determined by student academic achievement. The literature links high leader EI scores to organizational success. In particular, Goleman (1995, 1998) asserted that leaders who have high levels of EI have a greater effect on an organization than their counterparts with lower levels. This association was not confirmed using the sample, variables, and the correlation prediction procedures applied in this research.

Thus, research results lead back to Bracey’s (2003) conclusion that it is important to find out why principals, with equivalent educational training and occupational experience, obtain different levels of school success. Education has experienced many interventions with promise to improve student academic achievement. Some have met expectations, others have not. EI is relatively new in the area of school leadership, and additional research is needed to determine its impact on leadership in schools and whether or not there is potential to positively affect student academic achievement.

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**Related Items:**

- Table 1: Frequencies of Demographic Data by School Status
- Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on EI Branch Scores
- Table 3: Individual Branch Score Cross Tabulations: Meets AYP
- Table 4: Individual Branch Score Cross Tabulations: Not Meet AYP
- Table 5: Logistic Regression on Perceiving and Managing Emotions Branch Scores
- Table 6: Logistic Regression on Principals’ Age
- Table 7: Logistic Regression on Understanding and Managing Emotions Branch Scores
- Table 8: Logistic Regression on Perceiving, Facilitating, Understanding and Managing Emotions Branch Scores
- Article References
Structuring a Teacher Education Program for Faculty Collaboration and Second-Order Change

by Tammy V. Abernathy & Shanon S. Taylor

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe the structure and functions of an integrated elementary special education undergraduate teacher program (Integrated Elementary/Special Education Teacher Education Program, ITEP). By abandoning our old “enhancement model” of teacher education, we redesigned our program into a “merged model.” We examine this restructuring from the perspective of first- and second-order change, and we discuss the obstacles we found that prohibit meaningful second-order change. Finally, we briefly discuss how our experiences in designing ITEP and our state’s devastating fiscal crisis have affected our teacher-education programs and nudged us into more authentic second-order changes.

1. Introduction

The widely accepted practice of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms has changed our thinking about the knowledge and skills general and special educators need to thrive in today’s schools. It has become increasingly clear that more needs to be done to prepare a versatile, better-prepared teacher corps that is equipped to meet the educational needs of all children. Preservice teacher-preparation programs must increase the number of highly qualified and highly effective graduates who are certified to teach special education and increase efforts to retain those professionals in the field of special education. In addition, general education teachers need knowledge and skills that meet the needs of students with disabilities. Teacher-education programs must prepare teachers with strong content knowledge, pedagogical skills in both special and general education, and skills in the use of evidence-based practices. Finally, teacher-preparation programs need rigorous fieldwork components in which preservice teachers demonstrate their ability to serve all students, including those with disabilities and those who are English-language learners.

Legislative changes with accountability demands and competing agendas of accreditation and university expectations have prompted teacher-education programs to redesign and restructure themselves. The need has become so urgent that federal funding exists to support these endeavors (Office of Special Education Programs 325T Program Improvement Grants). Regardless of legislative mandates, policy changes, and attitudinal shifts, orchestrating innovative teacher-education programs within the constraints of university policies, scheduling, and credit expectations can set boundaries on creativity and stunt innovative programming. Traditional teacher-education programs may attempt to change to meet growing calls for reform in K–12 education, but programs are still constrained by university guidelines, which may be more inflexible and even slower to change than K–12 education.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the structure and functions of a redesigned elementary special education undergraduate teacher program (ITEP). We abandoned our old “enhancement model” (two separate majors, with independent coursework) of teacher education and redesigned our program into a model that blends features of an integrated and merged model. Blanton, Pugach, and Florian (2011) define integrated programs as those in which prospective general and special education teachers study a redesigned, common core curriculum together to become general education teachers, and only those who want to become advanced specialists go on for additional studies to develop specialized expertise and an additional license in special education built on this common base of knowledge (p. 21).
A merged model of teacher education is defined as one in which there is

general and special education program content offered in one single curriculum that is completely integrated, including all
courses and field experiences (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, p. 23).

ITEP provides all students with general education and special-education content as part of an integrated program model, but it makes
this a requirement of all students. The program uses features of a merged model by integrating coursework and field experience.

We examine restructuring from the perspective of first- and second-order change, and we discuss the factors we found to be related to
meaningful second-order change. Finally, we briefly discuss how our experiences in designing ITEP have informed us as we look
towards more restructuring within our teacher-education programs.

2. Background and Theoretical Influences

The College of Education was reorganized, giving us the opportunity to revise our teacher-education programs. The primary goal of the
reorganization was to divide the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, which had grown too large and complex with 35 faculty
members. Reorganization was based on program areas and also on personal preferences. That is, faculty needed to feel comfortable
with the department they were working in and feel secure that the organization would promote their professional agendas. The
Department of Educational Specialties was created with faculty from Special Education, Literacy, TESOL and three content-area
specialists, one each in math, science, and social studies. This new configuration of faculty reflected a shared vision of teacher education
and the inclusive practices necessary to engage in program revision.

Theoretical Influences on Program Development

The goal of the 2003 restructuring was to design a new, more integrated elementary special education preservice licensure program. In
doing so, we sought to conform to Blanton and Pugach’s (2007) model of a merged elementary/special education program.
Reorganization allowed us to abandon our dual-major programs with separate elementary and special education majors (enhancement
model) and build an Integrated Elementary/Special Education Teacher Education Program (ITEP). As Lesar, Benner, Habel, and
Coleman (1997) point out, resistance, both human and institutional, to unified and integrated programs is only one of the barriers to
building and maintaining a truly integrated program. Despite the expected resistance and full disclosure of potential barriers, we opted to
restructure with the ideal model (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, and Pugach, 1997) in mind for our teacher-preparation program.

Mindful of organizational theory that suggests that organizations tend to “absorb change in such a manner as to retain fundamental
stability” (Waks, 2007 p. 2), we attempted to create a new integrated teacher-education program. The new program was designed to
allow faculty to gently absorb change and remain slightly stable while providing opportunities for innovation. Further, proposed changes
were framed in Hargreaves’ (1998) conceptualizations of education change. We abandoned a “means to an end” process and accepted
change as complex and chaotic. We planned for resistance and embraced the chaos. There was no preconceived plan forced upon
faculty, and faculty were given the flexibility to personalize the organization and structure of their work.

Our redesign was guided by three significant influences. First, Cuban’s (1990) organizational change theory, Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s
(1999) description of “knowledge of practice” (p. 23) and Ross and Blanton’s (2004) discussions of “communities” (p. 17).

Based on Cuban’s description of first- and second-order change, we attempted to configure the program so that faculty could first
overcome initial resistance that accompanies first-order change, but have a structure in place that invited and encouraged second-order
change as faculty developed new skills and learned new content. Building a structure for delivering the new integrated program became
a focus. Our thinking was that we needed to move out from a traditional university structure and create systems and communities that
were more fluid and responsive to change.

Cuban’s work with K–12 leadership (1992) is applicable to university faculty as well. Cuban described first-order change as alterations
an organization makes that do not significantly alter the roles or duties of faculty. Stability for the organization and individuals remains in
check. For example, the sequence of courses may be altered in a program. Additional courses may be added, and content from one
course may be moved to a new course, freeing up time in the original course for new material. Faculty may also be asked to teach a
new course. These changes may or may not feel significant to a faculty member, but they do not significantly alter one’s knowledge base
or tax one’s skill level. The discomfort is minimal, and typically faculty members acclimate quickly.

Our goal was to undergo a “second-order” change in our teacher education program by setting new, more inclusive goals and
transforming the way instruction is delivered to our preservice teachers. This goal matches the recommendations in AACTE’s 2011
report, Preparing General Education Teachers to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities (Blanton, Pugach, & Florian, 2011).
Second-order change is significant. As Cuban explained, second-order change alters the way an organization is structured. New goals
and roles are introduced, and the changes transform traditional actions. Our plan was to drastically alter the role of faculty and give our
students a more authentic preparation experience that modeled the experiences of elementary general and special education teachers.
Second-order change is slow and cannot be mandated or dictated. An organization that provides a structure for change and encourages
change by the exchange of ideas will be more likely to experience some level of second-order change. To that end, the structure, order,
and sequence of the program became a prime focus of our restructuring effort.

Our second theoretical influence was found in the work of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), who were clearly critical of “knowledge for
practice” teacher education and instead favored a knowledge of practice paradigm. Knowledge for practice teacher education assumes
that the more you know, the more effective your instructional practice. There is an implied assumption that a common core of knowledge
is essential. Researchers generate knowledge that is passed on to preservice teachers, and when they know enough, they are ready to
Teach. Comparable to the knowledge for practice model, special education teacher education has traditionally embraced this
A technological approach to preparation (Winn & Blanton, 1997). In this model, preservice teachers develop a knowledge base of learner characteristics and how teachers should behave and deliver instruction. They study and are tested on effective practice. Then, after they have mastered the content or knowledge of teaching they are transitioned into school settings to practice their craft. The idea is that the more preservice teachers know about teaching, the more likely they will be to become effective teachers. Our goal was to step out of this model. We had seen too many examples of excellent students in coursework struggle to become effective teachers. We wanted to incorporate more of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) “knowledge of practice” perspective, where learning to teach was embedded in the act of teaching.

Knowledge of practice moves beyond knowledge for practice (learning then doing) by including collaborative critical inquiry opportunities and expanding our notions of community to include students, teachers, faculty, and others focused on improving outcomes for learners. Knowledge of practice emphasizes collaboratively constructing knowledge within a professional community. It is a facilitated/guided learning while doing.

Borrowing from Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s ideas on knowledge of practice, we incorporated Ross and Blanton’s (2004) ideas about community. We considered how we might structure our new program to provide faculty with smaller, more autonomous communities of practice. We were hoping to inspire research, study our pedagogy, and develop collaborating writing relationships within these smaller communities. Content faculty (math, science, social studies) teaming with special education faculty was encouraged. Flexible scheduling and compacted courses provided important opportunities to rethink how we taught our students. By organizing our program around the notion of smaller communities of practice, we expected students and inservice teachers serving as mentors to be drawn into these communities and become influential members (Ross & Blanton, 2004). Our expectation was that these communities would facilitate the study of teacher education practices and attitudes while monitoring our preservice teachers’ development.

Knowing that accreditation standards and testing standards (PRAXIS) for preservice teachers could not be ignored, we blended Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s notions of teacher knowledge into our redesign. We were determined to promote our own notion of knowledgeable practice, a blending of knowledge learned in coursework and further developed in communities of practice with teaching skills developed in intensive field experiences.

### 3. Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP): The Result of Our Work

Based on Ross and Blanton’s (2004) idea of “communities,” the Integrated Elementary/Special Education Teacher Education Program (ITEP) was organized into Blocks (groupings) of courses that preservice teachers complete each semester. Candidates took their courses in semester-long Blocks, clustered in a predetermined sequence. To promote “knowledgeable practice” a Block was conceptualized as a wheel, with the practicum/seminar as the hub. The practicum/seminar was an opportunity for preservice teachers to develop their teaching skills and demonstrate that they could translate what they learned in courses to actual K–8 classrooms. Generally, each Block included a literacy course, one or more content area methods courses, and a special education intensive course. Most semester Blocks also included foundations courses such as educational law and ethics, multicultural education, or case management. In addition, each Block attended to five specific professional domains (developed from the INTASC standards): knowledge of students, knowledge of subject matter and planning, delivery and management of instruction, knowledge and use of assessment, and professionalism. Courses are organized to meet state licensure standards and university prerequisite requirements. See Figure 2 for a diagram of the program semester-by-semester.

Preservice teachers, in this case, undergraduates, took courses in BLOCK 1 as premajors, before being admitted to the ITEP Program. Students in BLOCK 1 were EXPLORE teaching and learning. Students were required to be admitted to ITEP to enroll in BLOCK 2: DEVELOP. Preservice teachers’ knowledge of learners and learning was extended in BLOCK 2 as they began to teach small groups of students in literacy, math, science and technology, and assessment. Preservice teachers in BLOCK 3 were ENGAGE students to build connections among subject areas to diverse learners within partner schools. They learned to engage larger groups of students. In Block 4, preservice teachers were REFINE their knowledge and skills developed in the previous blocks and focused on struggling learners, instructional interventions, and modifications as they prepared for their full-time internship. Preservice teachers learned how to create individualized plans including positive behavior support plans, transition plans, individualized reading lessons, and how to meet the needs of struggling students.

During internship in the final semester, preservice teachers assumed full responsibility for their classrooms. The supervised internship was two, 10-week culminating experiences in which candidates systematically assumed the roles of both a general education and a special education teacher.

ITEP was NCATE accredited, and courses were strategically designed to include NCATE standards and to coordinate with other courses in the program. Blocks were given a great deal of flexibility in terms of course delivery and pedagogy. They were not, however, afforded autonomy to significantly alter course content. If courses needed significant retooling, changes had to be approved by the Block, the ITEP program, and the department.

### Communities of Practice – a.k.a., Blocks

The development of the Blocks and their sequence were the organizational structure that gave the program coherence. Just as the chapter names and headings direct a reader in a dissertation, our Block structure directed preservice teachers to where they were in.
their professional development. As a small community of practice, each Block was responsible for the management and delivery of the courses within the Block. Further, the faculty who taught the courses in a given Block designed the practicum for the Block. This practice assured the program that each practicum was aligned with content, skills, and practices the preservice teachers are learning in the Block.

Blocks were considered communities of practice. Each had the autonomy it needed to be successful and innovative. The original vision of this program reconstruction was to provide opportunities for innovative teaching that could be considered second-order change. The Block structure provided opportunities for teaming and collaborative teaching within the Block. The structure also allowed revising class schedules. For example, class times could be rearranged within a Block. One instructor could teach six hours per week for the first half of a semester and complete their course, and another instructor could teach six hours per week for the second half of the semester. Time was fluid, and blocks were given the flexibility to revise class time as made sense to them and the content.

Blocks also functioned much like student intervention or assistance teams. Within Blocks, faculty could head off student problems and actively engaged in problem solving to assure preservice teachers were ready for internship. Faculty had information about preservice teacher progress, but they also had information about performance in practicum. These performance data were essential in making critical decisions about struggling students and providing additional support.

4. Continuous Program Improvement – Are We There Yet?

Once we began implementation we realized we needed a mechanism for continuous program improvement. Three goals guided our improvement efforts: 1) NCATE accreditation was essential, 2) positive preservice teacher outcomes were essential as measured by PRAXIS II, which is required for licensure, and 3) a focus on the “principle of coordination” (Sapona, et al. 2006, p. 3). This principle suggests that faculty communication about coursework, field experiences, and student progress take place within and between Blocks. We developed three internal systems for guiding our program improvement efforts. These included curriculum mapping, Block Parties, and formative evaluations.

To complete our curriculum mapping process, we borrowed a strategy from K–12 schools. We wanted to ensure that we were meeting INTASC/NCATE standards within our courses as well as preparing our students for the PRAXIS exam. At the same time, we wanted to make sure we didn’t have any critical gaps in our curriculum or any redundancies in instruction that could be eliminated. Our next step was to create our Block Parties. These were organized meetings in relaxed settings in which Blocks could share the objectives within their Block, and allow connections to be made from one Block to another. It allowed faculty to see what knowledge students should bring with them from previous Blocks, and what knowledge they would need to succeed in the next Block.

Finally, we needed a tool for understanding students’ perspectives of their experience in ITEP. The third piece of our program improvement efforts involved a sequence or rotation of formative evaluations. A formative evaluation process was created when the program was in its infancy so that we could be responsive to student issues and problems within the program. While it is true that a program needs time to smooth out some of the trouble spots, it is also true that data can help identify the trouble spots and monitor program improvement or lack thereof.

Blocks were responsible for creating instruments and collecting formative evaluation data. The learning outcomes for preservice were different in each Block. The level and sophistication of the preservice teachers was different; consequently, each Block was given autonomy to create evaluation instruments, including items, formatting, and structure. Each instrument created was slightly different but targeted to specific issues within each Block. Evaluations were scheduled on alternating semesters. Initially, Block 1, Block 3, and Internship were evaluated. The following semester, Block 2 and Block 4 were evaluated.

Block Studies

Change like the restructuring described above is difficult for a faculty and a program. Some faculty embraced the new structure and saw opportunities for innovation. Some faculty felt threatened by the changes, and the amount communication required to participate in a Block or community of practice. Others were unwilling to link their coursework with courses in the Block. We recognized the challenges our faculty faced in our program reconstruction. We also recognized that we were changing, but at a basic level, what Cuban (1990) would call a “first order change”. There were plenty of opportunities for faculty to quickly find their equilibrium and not have to make drastic changes unless they chose to. That said, Lesar’s (1997) warning of “resistence” showed up early in our program implementation.

Below are the results of our early Block Study (similar to a Case Study). Formative evaluations were conducted, compiled, and summarized by graduate assistants not affiliated with the program. Preservice teachers were asked to respond to a host of questions related to their experiences within the new Blocks. Results were reported back to the Block through the ITEP coordinating committee. Meeting minutes were also used as an important resource in developing our Block Studies.

Block 2 – Developing (Our struggling Block of courses). Block 2 was the first Block students experienced after being admitted to ITEP. Technically, Block 2 was the students’ first real “welcome” to our department and program. During Block 2 we planned to actively promote community and professionalism. Students were required to complete courses in:

- Literacy in Elementary and Special Education: K–3
- Integrated Science, Math, Technology
- Assessment for Special Education Teacher
- “Developing” Practicum/Seminar (one full instructional day per week)

After five years of implementation, Block 2 remained our most “loosely coupled” Block. In other words, faculty preferred to structure their teaching and interactions in traditional university course structure. Faculty in Block 2 resisted innovation more than faculty in the other Blocks, and they continued to act the most independently. Evaluation data collected from students in this Block and a review of program
meeting minutes revealed three persistent problem areas. The first problem identified was an overall lack of communication between colleagues. Most faculty members elected to work independently and chose not to strand content or practices throughout the Block. Second, the lack of collaboration showed in a disjointed practicum experience that did not align with coursework. In fact, one instructor took her students out of class for her own separate practicum. Faculty resisted the opportunity to align and blend topics across courses such as covering Curriculum-based Measurement and Response to Intervention in both the assessment and literacy course. Finally, student responses suggested that Block 2 was their least cohesive experience. It is unclear if this was due to faculty participation or the arrangement of courses. Because Block 2 represented our preservice teachers’ official welcome to our program, the “struggling” status of this Block was a challenge and a concern.

**Block 3 – Engaging (Our high achieving Block of courses)**. Block 3 was the most content heavy Block in the program, with four classes and one-full day practicum. These courses were:

- Literacy in Elementary and Special Education: 4-8
- Math Instruction Elementary/Special Education
- Social Studies for Elementary/Special Education
- Special Education Curriculum: General Methods
- “Engaging” Practicum/Seminar (one full-day per week)

By the time preservice teachers arrived in Block 3, they were accustomed to the Block structure, but they were unprepared for the amount of work required in the Block. Despite the difficulty of the courses, Block 3 was considered our “high achiever.” It was tightly coupled. Specifically, minutes from Block meetings suggested that faculty worked closely to plan both class activities and the practicum experience to create a cohesive learning experience. For example, Block 3 faculty collaborated to plan assignments that started in one class, social studies, and then were used again in a modification activity in Special Education General Methods. Also, faculty coordinated assignment due dates, so dates were staggered and meaningfully sequenced. A master calendar was created for the Block.

Block 3 used student feedback to make constructive changes to the coursework in the Block and the practicum. We called Block 3 our “high achiever” because it operated as a community of practice that worked together to improve outcomes for preservice teachers. For a side-by-side comparison of the differences between Block 2 and Block 3, refer to Table 3.

5. Where Did We End Up?

Upon reflection, while we have made significant changes and graduated quality teachers, as evidenced by our performance assessments, we did not meet our goal of second-order change. Our results were aligned more with Van Laarhoven, Munk, Lynch, Bosma, and Rouse’s (2007) model for Project ACCEPT, where structural changes to the program yielded improvements in preservice skill level and attitudes, but courses and clinical experiences were independent of one another. We pushed for an integrated program by attempting a second-order change and introducing “new goals, structures and roles that transform ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems” (Cuban, 1990 p. 73). We moved, we transitioned, we negotiated, we restructured, and yet the result was a stronger merged elementary special education teacher education program that Cuban would still consider a first-order change and Hargreaves would identify as structural.

The reasons second-order change may have been an unrealistic goal have become apparent, unfortunately in hindsight. First and unbeknownst to us, our faculty were not as collaborative as we had anticipated or they had initially suggested. Faculty were not resistant to changing the program, but they were resistant to changing their personal professional life. We learned that not all of our faculty want to be teacher educators. A specialized area of teaching and research is more highly valued by some faculty, and teacher education is a small portion of their lives. Some faculty preferred graduate education. Faculty were also clear in their stance that merit, tenure, and scholarly productivity trumped teacher education and program work. Some vocal faculty made it clear that retooling or making the types of changes the program advocated for (e.g., blending or co-teaching courses) were not in their personal professional best interest. Upon reflection the reward structure of higher education makes this stance understandable.

While we found that some faculty were resistant to second-order change, we discovered that the institution was not suited to accommodate second-order change either. ITEP was required to fit into university systems, and all attempts to change the structure were met with resistance. For example, scheduling became a stressor on the program. In order to block courses and reserve rooms required we were forced to override the university computing system so that we could arrange courses in a structure that made instructional sense for our students.

However, making these scheduling changes created other problems. We had to notify students of the schedule change, and many times our students did not receive notice of the change and would show up for class on the wrong day or the wrong time. On other occasions, the unscheduled change would conflict with other courses they had registered to take. Finally, when two faculty members shared the block of time and allocated it based on instructional needs, there was sometimes confusion as to who was teaching on what day; consequently, students were unhappy. Scheduling one part of a course on-campus and the other part off-campus was too challenging for the university’s scheduling office; as a result, they resisted working with us to create a school day structure for our students that mirrored the day of K–12 students. The lack of flexibility within the university allowed resistant faculty to blame the institution for the lack of second-order change.

The third barrier to second-order change was our constituent groups. The local school district signed off on the program and was overwhelmingly encouraging. However, the school district’s priorities and ITEP’s priorities were not always aligned. For example, field experience was critical to the program. The local districts expected our students would have considerable field experience (250 hours) prior to their student teaching. Scheduling field experiences for students every semester, in quality schools, where we could provide direct service to students (knowledgeable practice) and then have time to debrief in a seminar (knowledge of practice) held on site was challenging. While we had the approval of the school district, it became ITEP’s responsibility to recruit suitable field placements and to
train and prepare teachers. The school district, rightfully so, had other, more pressing concerns. Maintaining seamless coordination between school districts and the university was a lesson in the fluidity of organizations (Waks, 2007).

When we developed ITEP, we accepted Hargreaves’ notion that change is not linear and that the process would be complex and chaotic. We expected resistance, but we were surprised by the efforts of faculty to push back. We found we could not expect a junior faculty member to attempt something instructionally challenging when tenure was their most important goal. We could not expect a bureaucratic institution to waive rules for our specific programs. We anticipated that the structure of the program would allow us to continuously improve our program and consequently outcomes for our preservice teachers. Organizations are slow to evolve.

Our goal was to build a program structure that allowed us to work towards Wak’s notion of stability (2007). According to Waks there are so many societal changes, legislative changes, university changes, and personnel changes occurring concurrently that people seek any opportunity to stabilize. We learned that once ITEP was running and the problems were minimal, faculty retreated from communities of practice. Stability within the program eliminated the need for interdependence and collegiality.

6. Money Changes Everything: Our Societal Shift

On March 1, 2010 the state’s budget crises forced the College of Education (COE) into another first-order change, and this time, perhaps, the second-order change we wanted. Oddly, it took an epic fiscal crisis to challenge our creativity and to create a new COE. The College of Education was reduced by 30%. Seven faculty were eliminated and three programs closed. We were given one month to respond to the crisis. A plan to restructure the college without departments and to consolidate all undergraduate licensure, masters, and doctoral programs was developed. While faculty within ITEP never fully embraced second-order change, faculty throughout the COE were intrigued by our integrated program. Many influential colleagues in the COE thought that ITEP could be used as a model to blend all of our licensure programs. It is interesting that during the creation of the ITEP we perceived colleagues outside our department as our critics. Surprisingly, these faculty stepped up to applaud the integrated program and consequently designed an ITEP-based fully integrated program for all areas of elementary instruction.

As a result of our budget crisis, we eliminated all stand-alone teaching majors. For example, elementary education, early childhood, and special education majors were eliminated. Instead, all teaching majors will be admitted to our Integrated Elementary Plus Program. All teaching majors will receive an elementary license, but they will also receive an additional special education license, early childhood license, or English Language Learners endorsement. Students will self-select their specialty areas. With available electives, students may be able to add a second endorsement or take content courses to be “highly qualified” in specific content. Consequently, we have one undergraduate teaching program with three integrated specialty areas (see Figure 3). The COE now has a fully integrated program with multiple dual licenses. This plan maximizes resources, encourages more collaboration between faculty than ever before in the history of the COE, and will develop more high quality dual licensed educators ready to meet the challenges of today’s classrooms (Abernathy, Burnham, Crowther, and Horvath, 2011).

Upon reflection, Hargreaves’ notion of change as chaotic could not be more true. We learned from our ITEP experience that despite the development of a strong program structure, faculty preferred to be autonomous and only feign real change. A crisis changes everything, and when faculty’s livelihood and life’s work are threatened, faculty engage. Even the most resistant members are changing. Our two major program revisions yielded results just as Hargreaves would have predicted. In our original ITEP we had good intentions, but no real reason for all faculty in our department to change. Real change occurs as a result of societal forces. Therefore, today, keeping a job has become the real motivator for “second-order change.” What remains unclear is whether, when stability returns, faculty will once again retreat to autonomy.

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Related Items:

- Figure 1. Conceptual model of Blocks
- Figure 2. Integrated Teacher Education Program Structure
- Figure 3. New Integrated Elementary Plus Program Excluding University Content Core Requirements
- Article References

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209 S. Kingshighway - St. Charles, Missouri 63301